



Maryland Forests Association, Inc.

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Maryland's voice for forest, wildlife, and natural resource management

March 15, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401 – 1991

Re: SB0737 The Comprehensive Conservation Finance Act of 2021

Dear Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chairwoman Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Forests Association (MFA) supports and encourages the passage of SB 737, the Comprehensive Conservation Finance Act.

Maryland Forests Association, Inc. (MFA) is Maryland's voice for forest, wildlife, and natural resource management. As a non-profit 501 c(3) membership-driven organization established in 1976, we represent the entire forest community statewide. Our membership includes private landowners, foresters, recreational groups, and industry stakeholders. We are a conservation-minded group that wants to see forests remain forests. Passage of SB 737 will help accomplish our vision- "The Maryland Forests Association envisions a future in which vibrant forests are maintained throughout the State, providing diverse economic and environmental benefits to all."

If adopted, this legislation provides benefits to Maryland forests in a number of ways. First, the bill encourages DNR to create a working group and bring in expertise on voluntary and other carbon markets. This additional capacity could help speed up opportunities for Maryland landowners to benefit from these markets. Second, the bill supports a diversity of approaches that focus on environmental outcomes that forests can produce and benefit the Chesapeake Bay. Forests are the original 'green infrastructure.' The bill would create contract approaches that allow forest landowners to be rewarded for what they deliver and provide more flexibility on achieving the landowner's goals and objectives on the ground.

We respectfully request your **favorable** report on Senate Bill 737 to establish a greater priority for nature-based solutions. A Healthy Forest = A Healthy Bay.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hill
Executive Director
Maryland Forests Association

CC: Senator Jim Rosapepe
Senator Guy Guzzone
Senator Sarah Elfreth
Senator Will Smith
Senator Mary Washington
Senator Ron Young

