

Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County

October 21, 2019

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dear County Executive Ball:

The Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County is an alliance of local and state organizations working together to protect the county's outstanding environmental assets to preserve and enhance the quality of life enjoyed by residents.

We thank you for your publicized goal of improving protections for Howard County's forests and your plans to amend the local forest conservation law accordingly. As you move forward with this effort, please know that we strongly support:

- Changing the standard used to grant alternative compliance (waivers) to "unwarranted hardship" instead of the current "practical difficulty" which is less stringent than State law.
- Decreasing the amount of trees that can be removed before reforestation requirements apply.
- Adding greater protections for large, contiguous tracts of forest that provide a variety of benefits, including stormwater management and wildlife habitat.
- Increasing penalties for willful violations.

We hope you will consider the Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County a resource as your efforts to improve Howard County's forest conservation law advance. We appreciate your administration's interest in preserving natural resources for the health and safety of County residents.

Sincerely,

Audubon Maryland-DC
David Curson
Director of Bird Conservation

Maryland Conservation Council
Paulette Hammond
President

Audubon Society of Central Maryland
Morgan Lakey
President

Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Kim Coble
Executive Director

Clean Water Action
Emily Ranson
Maryland Program Coordinator

Maryland Ornithological Society
Kurt R. Schwarz
Conservation Chair

Community Ecology Institute
Chiara D'Amore, Ph.D.
President

Preservation Maryland
Kimberly Golden Brandt
Director of Smart Growth Maryland

Earth Forum of Howard County
Sue L. Harris
Director

Safe Skies Maryland
Mark Southerland, Ph.D.
Legislative Director

Howard County Bird Club
Mary Lou Clark
President

Savage Community Association
Susan Garber
Board Chair

Howard County Citizens Association
Stu Kohn
President

The People's Voice, LLC
Lisa M. Markovitz
President

Howard County Sierra Club
Carolyn Parsa
Chair

Transition Howard County
Margo Duesterhaus
President

cc: The Honorable Howard County Council