

MEMORANDUM

TO: County Council

FROM: *M* Michael Faden, Senior Legislative Attorney
Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney *amihill*

SUBJECT: **Introduction:** Expedited Bill 25-14, Forest Conservation – Amendments

Expedited Bill 25-14, Forest Conservation - Amendments, sponsored by the Council President at the request of the Planning Board, is scheduled to be introduced on May 6, 2014. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for June 10 at 1:30 p.m.

Bill 25-14 would amend Chapter 22A for consistency with State law by exempting the following from certain requirements of the Forest Conservation Law: stream restoration projects and maintenance or retrofitting of stormwater management structures. Bill 25-14 would also make other clarifying changes to the Forest Conservation Law.

This packet contains:

Expedited Bill 25-14

Legislative Request Report

Memo from Planning Board

State law (House Bill 706)

Circle #

1

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Expedited Bill No. 25-14
Concerning: Forest Conservation –
Amendments
Revised: 4/29/14 Draft No. 1
Introduced: May 6, 2014
Expires: November 6, 2015
Enacted: _____
Executive: _____
Effective: _____
Sunset Date: None
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council President at the request of the Planning Board

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

- (1) exempt certain stream restoration projects from certain requirements of the forest conservation law;
- (2) exempt certain maintenance or retrofitting of stormwater management structures from certain requirements of the forest conservation law; and
- (3) generally amend the forest conservation law.

By amending

Montgomery County Code
Chapter 22A, Forest Conservation – Trees
Sections 22A-3, 22A-4, 22A-5, 22A-11, 22A-12, 22A-20

Boldface	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
[Single boldface brackets]	<i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>
<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

Sec. 1. Sections 22A-3, 22A-4, 22A-5, 22A-11, 22A-12, and 22A-20 are amended as follows:

22A-3. Definitions.

* * *

Developed area means the portion of a property which has been altered from its natural state by the construction of a building, recreational facility, road or alley, rail line, athletic field, stormwater management facility, parking lot, or utility.

Developed property means a property that contains a developed area.

Development application means an application, as described in Section 22A-4, filed with the Planning Board, Planning Director, Board of Appeals, Hearing Examiner, or Department of Permitting Services, for plan approval or sediment control permit.

* * *

Stream Restoration Project means an activity that:

- (1) is designed to stabilize stream banks or enhance stream function or habitat located in an existing stream, waterway, or floodplain;
- (2) avoids and minimizes impacts to forests and provides for replanting on-site an equivalent number of trees to the number removed by the project;
- (3) may be performed under a municipal separate storm sewer system permit, a watershed implementation plan growth offset, or another plan administered by the State or local government to achieve or maintain water quality standards; and
- (4) is not performed to satisfy stormwater management, wetlands mitigation, or any other regulatory requirement associated with a development application.

* * *

22A-4. Applicability

Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Chapter, this Chapter applies to:

- (a) a person required by law to obtain an initial approval or amendment to a development plan [approval], diagrammatic plan [approval], project plan [approval], preliminary plan of subdivision [approval], or site plan [approval];

* * *

22A-5. Exemptions.

* * *

- (t) a modification to an existing non-residential developed property if:

(1) no more than ~~[5000]~~ 5,000 square feet of forest ~~[will be cleared]~~ is ever cleared in one event or cumulatively over multiple events from the first exemption;

(2) the modification does not ~~[affect]~~ result in the cutting, clearing, or grading of any forest in a stream buffer or ~~[forest]~~ located on property in a special protection area which must submit a water quality plan; ~~[and]~~

(3) the modification does not require approval of a ~~[new]~~ preliminary plan of subdivision plan[.]; and

(4) the modification does not increase the developed area by more than 50% and the existing development is retained;

- (u) maintaining or retrofitting an existing stormwater management structure if:

(1) the clearing of vegetation or removal and trimming of trees is for the maintenance or retrofitting of the structure and in the original limits of disturbance for construction of the existing facility; and

- (2) the tract is not included in a previously approved forest conservation plan; and
- (v) a stream restoration project for which the applicant for a sediment control permit has:
- (1) executed a binding maintenance agreement of at least 5 years with the affected property owner or owners;
- (2) agreed to replace every tree removed and plant the new trees in the first planting season after final stabilization; and
- (3) confirmed the tract is not included in a previously approved forest conservation plan.

22A-11. Application, review, and approval procedures.

* * *

- (b) *Project requiring development plan, project plan, preliminary plan of subdivision, or site plan approval.*

* * *

(2) *Forest conservation plan.*

(A) *Application.* [Upon notification] After being notified that the forest stand delineation is complete and correct, the applicant must submit a forest conservation plan to the Planning Director. If the development proposal will require more than one of the approvals subject to this subsection, the applicant must submit a preliminary forest conservation plan to the Planning Director in conjunction with the first approval and a final forest conservation plan in conjunction with the last approval. If only one approval subject to this subsection is required, an applicant[, with the approval of the Planning Board, may] must submit a

preliminary forest conservation plan at the time of the development [approval] application and a final forest conservation plan before [issuance of] a sediment control permit is issued for the tract, but no later than a record plat is submitted.

* * *

(C) [*Condition of approval*] Approval. The Planning Board must review and act on the forest conservation plan [will be reviewed by the Planning Board] concurrently with the development plan, project plan, preliminary plan of subdivision or site plan, as appropriate. [The] Compliance with the preliminary forest conservation plan, as [may be] amended by the Board, must be made a condition of any approval of the first applicable development application. Compliance with the final forest conservation plan, as amended by the Board, must be made a condition of any approval of the last development application. For a development plan, a Planning Board recommendation to the District Council on the preliminary forest conservation plan must be made under Section 59-D-1.4. A final forest conservation plan must be approved by the Planning Board or Planning Director, as appropriate, before the Planning Board approves a record plat.

* * *

(d) *Project requiring a sediment control permit only.*

* * *

(3) Issuance of sediment control permit. A sediment control permit must not be issued to a person who must comply with this Article until[:

(A)] a final forest conservation plan, if required, is approved[; and

(B) any financial security instrument required under this Chapter is provided].

* * *

22A-12. Retention, afforestation, and reforestation requirements.

* * *

(g) *In lieu fee.*

(1) *General.* If a person satisfactorily demonstrates that the requirements for reforestation or afforestation on-site or off-site cannot be reasonably accomplished, the person must contribute money to the forest conservation fund at a rate specified [by the County Council] by law or Council resolution, but not less than the rate required under Section 5-1610 of the Natural Resources Article of the Maryland Code. [The requirement to contribute money must be met within 90 days after development project completion.] Any in lieu fee payment must be made before any land disturbing activity, as defined in Chapter 19, occurs on a section of the tract subject to the forest conservation plan.

* * *

(i) *Financial Security.*

* * *

(4) *Amount required.*

(A) If [the] financial security is required under subparagraph (1)(A) [of this subsection], the security instrument must be in an amount equal to the estimated cost of afforestation, reforestation, and maintenance applicable to the section of the tract subject to the land disturbing activity. If the applicant sells an individual lot before providing the required financial security, the Planning Director may allow the new lot owner to provide a financial security that applies to the requirements specific to the development of their lot. The instrument must include a provision for adjusting the amount based on actual costs. The financial security instrument must be submitted to the Planning Director before any land disturbing activity occurs on the tract. The Planning Director must notify the obligee of any proposed adjustment and provide the opportunity for an informal conference.

* * *

22A-20. Hearings and appeals.

* * *

(c) *Forest stand delineations, exemptions from Article II, and forest conservation plans [approved] reviewed by the Planning Director.*

* * *

Sec. 2. Expedited Effective Date.

The Council declares that this legislation is necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on the date when it becomes law.

LEGISLATIVE REQUEST REPORT

Expedited Bill 25-14

Forest Conservation - Amendments

DESCRIPTION: Expedited Bill 25-14 would amend Chapter 22A for consistency with State law by exempting the following from certain requirements of the Forest Conservation Law: stream restoration projects and maintenance or retrofitting of stormwater management structures.

PROBLEM: Current County law is out of date and does not reflect State law changes made in 2013.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: To make County law consistent with State law.

COORDINATION: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

FISCAL IMPACT: To be requested.

ECONOMIC IMPACT: To be requested.

EVALUATION: To be requested.

EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE: To be researched.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION: Michael Faden, Senior Legislative Attorney, 240-777-7905
Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney, 240-777-7815

APPLICATION WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES: To be researched.

PENALTIES: A violation of Chapter 22A is a Class A violation.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

February 21, 2014

The Honorable Craig Rice
President, Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Craig
Dear Mr. Rice:

RECEIVED
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COUNCIL

2014 FEB 24 PM 1:50

On February 20, 2014, the Montgomery County Planning Board recommended 5-0 to transmit an Expedited Bill to the County Council to make the County's Forest Conservation Law consistent with House Bill 706, which became effective Statewide on October 1, 2013, and to make other clarifying changes to the law. The proposed revision:

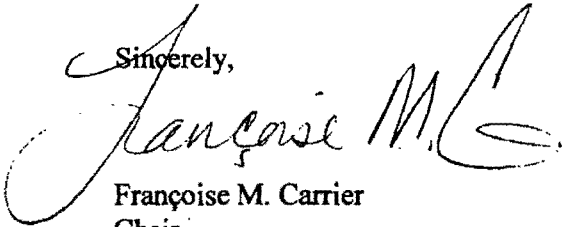
1. Adds four new definitions to Section 22A-3. The definitions are needed to clarify the various sections of the law. The definitions "developed area," "developed property" and "development application" are necessary to identify specific trigger points later in the law. The definition "stream restoration project" is from House Bill 706.
2. Clarifies Section 22A-4 by indicating that the forest conservation law applies to any person who is required to obtain approval of a new development application, or an amendment to a development application.
3. Changes Section 22A-5 to codify a staff practice and add two exemptions from submitting a forest conservation plan. The proposed change to 22A-5(t) clarifies that to qualify for an exemption, no more than 5000 square feet of forest can be removed cumulatively, the modification cannot substantially increase the developed area, and the existing use must be retained. Proposed exemptions 22A-5 (u) and (v) are in response to House Bill 706.
4. Will prevent unsuspecting lot purchasers from needing to obtain final forest conservation plan approval when small landowners who subdivide tracts of land have not procured approval of a final forest conservation plan prior to selling recording lots. In these cases the first new lot buyer currently has the additional responsibility to submit and finalize the final forest conservation plan before they can obtain a sediment control permit. The proposed changes to Section 22A-11(b)(2)(A) will require all final forest conservation plans be approved prior to Planning Board approval of the record plat. Thus, the party subdividing the land will have responsibility to gain approval for the final forest conservation plan before selling any lots.
5. Identifies that the Planning Board must approve a preliminary forest conservation plan with the first applicable development application, and a final forest conservation plan with the last applicable development application. Previously the law did not have a timing mechanism as

to when the forest conservation plans were to be approved by the Planning Board. These proposed changes are in Section 22A-11(b)(2)(C).

6. Removes the requirement that forest conservation financial surety be posted prior to the issuance of a sediment control permit. The Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services currently issues sediment control permits without ensuring the financial security is posted, and it is staff practice is to require financial surety prior to any land disturbance occurring on the subject site, not prior to a sediment control permit. The proposed change to Section 22A-11(d)(3) will codify the practice.
7. Clarifies that when a developer makes a payment in lieu of planting forest on site, the in-lieu fee payment is required prior to any land disturbing activity occurring on a section of the tract subject to a forest conservation plan. The current law allows applicants to make the in-lieu fee payment within 90 days after project development completion. In practice, however, applicants are providing the payment prior to land disturbance. Therefore the proposed changes to Section 22A-12(g)(1) codify the development community's practice of paying before land disturbance.
8. Allows individual lot owners to post a financial surety equivalent to their portion of the planting requirements associated with the forest conservation plan, instead of being responsible for the financial surety for the entire subdivision. The proposed changes to Section 22A-12(h)(4)(A) allow for property owners to pay a pro rata share of the overall financial surety.
9. Clarifies Section 22A-20 to identify that not just plans approved by the Planning Director but all plans reviewed by Planning Director can be appealed to the Planning Board. This will allow plans denied by the Planning Director to be appealed to the Planning Board.

Members of the Planning Board and Staff of the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission area available to assist the Council in its review of the proposed legislation. Enclosed is a copy of the staff report dated January 29, 2014 and language changes agreed to by the Planning Board during its discussion of the amendments on February 20, 2014.

Sincerely,



Françoise M. Carrier
Chair

cc: Mike Faden

Enclosures

Chapter 384

(House Bill 706)

AN ACT concerning

Natural Resources – Forest Preservation Act of 2013

FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources to provide a statewide forest resource inventory to local jurisdictions at certain intervals; declaring certain policies of the State with respect to forests; altering the defined term “construction activity” as it applies to reforestation requirements to include associated mitigation requirements; expanding the purpose and authorized uses of the Reforestation Fund to include financing tree planting on private land and financing the prevention of and response to forest health emergencies; extending the time frame within which the Department must accomplish certain reforestation requirements and for which certain funds are required to remain in the Reforestation Fund; repealing the requirements that the Department determine the meaning of “no net loss of forest”, develop related policies, and submit a certain report describing certain findings; defining the term “no net loss of forest”; altering the defined term “timber stand improvement” to include certain activities that improve forest health; altering the range of acres of land that a person is required to own or lease to be eligible for certification for a certain income tax subtraction or modification; altering certain prohibitions against setting certain fires; altering a certain minimum penalty for violating a certain prohibition against setting certain fires; exempting certain stream restoration projects and certain maintenance or retrofitting of a stormwater management structure from the requirements of the Forest Conservation Act; authorizing a local jurisdiction to waive the requirements of the Forest Conservation Act for certain previously developed areas; authorizing the Department to take certain action against a local jurisdiction for failure to comply with the Forest Conservation Act; requiring the Department of Planning, in consultation with the Department and the Sustainable Forestry Council, to provide certain technical assistance to local jurisdictions by a certain date; clarifying the intent of this Act with respect to the authority of the Department of Agriculture to establish forest policy; declaring a certain intent of the General Assembly; requiring the Department to convene a certain stakeholder group after a certain time to perform a certain review and make certain recommendations; making certain stylistic changes; defining certain terms; and generally relating to forest conservation and sustainability.

BY renumbering

Article – Natural Resources

Section 5–101(i), (j), (k), (l), and (m), respectively

to be Section 5-101(j), (k), (l), (m), and (n), respectively
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Replacement Volume)

BY renumbering

Article – Natural Resources
Section 5-1601(ff), (gg), (hh), (ii), (jj), (kk), (ll), (mm), and (nn), respectively
to be Section 5-1601(gg), (hh), (ii), (jj), (kk), (mm), (nn), (oo), and (pp),
respectively
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Land Use
Section 1-101(o)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Land Use
Section 1-408 and 3-104
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Natural Resources
Section 5-101(e), 5-103(a)(1) and (3), 5-1601(a), and 5-1602(a)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Replacement Volume)

BY adding to

Article – Natural Resources
Section 5-101(i), 5-103(j), 5-1601(ff) and (ll), and 5-1602(b)(12) and (13)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Natural Resources
Section 5-102, 5-103(a)(2) and (e), 5-219, 5-704, 5-1602(b)(10) and (11), and
5-1603(c)(3)(ii) and (e)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing

Article – Natural Resources
Section 5-104

Annotated Code of Maryland
(2012 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Tax – General
Section 10–208(a)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2010 Replacement Volume and 2012 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Tax – General
Section 10–208(i)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2010 Replacement Volume and 2012 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That Section(s) 5–101(i), (j), (k), (l), and (m), respectively, of Article – Natural Resources of the Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 5–101(j), (k), (l), (m), and (n), respectively.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section(s) 5–1601(ff), (gg), (hh), (ii), (jj), (kk), (ll), (mm), and (nn), respectively, of Article – Natural Resources of the Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 5–1601(gg), (hh), (ii), (jj), (kk), (mm), (nn), (oo), and (pp), respectively.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Land Use

1–101.

- (o) “Sensitive area” includes:
- (1) a stream or wetland, and its buffers;
 - (2) a 100–year flood plain;
 - (3) a habitat of a threatened or endangered species;
 - (4) a steep slope;
 - (5) agricultural or forest land intended for resource protection or conservation; and

(6) any other area in need of special protection, as determined in a plan.

1-408.

(a) A sensitive areas element shall include the goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards designed to protect sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development.

(b) **BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2013, THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES SHALL PROVIDE A STATEWIDE FOREST RESOURCE INVENTORY TO LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AT LEAST EVERY 5 YEARS, TO BE AVAILABLE FOR THE ~~6-YEAR~~ LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW BY LOCAL JURISDICTIONS REQUIRED UNDER §§ 1-416(A) AND 3-301(A) OF THIS ARTICLE.**

(C) Before the plan is adopted, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Natural Resources shall review the sensitive areas element to determine whether the proposed plan is consistent with the programs and goals of the departments.

3-104.

(a) A sensitive areas element shall include the goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards designed to protect sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development.

(b) **BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2013, THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES SHALL PROVIDE A STATEWIDE FOREST RESOURCE INVENTORY TO LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AT LEAST EVERY 5 YEARS, TO BE AVAILABLE FOR THE ~~6-YEAR~~ LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW BY LOCAL JURISDICTIONS REQUIRED UNDER §§ 1-416(A) AND 3-301(A) OF THIS ARTICLE.**

(C) Before the plan is adopted, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Natural Resources shall review the sensitive areas element to determine whether the proposed plan is consistent with the programs and goals of the departments.

Article – Natural Resources

5-101.

(e) (1) “Forest land” means a biological community dominated by trees and other woody plants that are capable of producing timber or other wood products with a stocking of at least 100 trees per acre with at least 50% of those trees having a 2-inch or greater diameter at 4.5 feet above the ground.

(2) "Forest land" includes forested areas that have been cut but not converted to other land uses.

(I) "NO NET LOSS OF FOREST" MEANS 40% OF ALL LAND IN MARYLAND IS COVERED BY TREE CANOPY.

5-102.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Forests, streams, valleys, wetlands, parks, and scenic, historic, and recreation areas of the State are basic assets and their proper use, development, and preservation are necessary to protect and promote the health, safety, economy, and general welfare of the people of the State;

(2) Enhancing the extent and condition of tree and forest cover in the Chesapeake Bay watershed is critical to the success in restoring the Chesapeake Bay because forests are the most beneficial use of protecting water quality due to their ability to capture, filter, and retain water, as well as absorb pollution from the air;

(3) Forests and trees are key indicators of climate change and can mitigate greenhouse gas emissions by carbon sequestration;

(4) Forests provide habitat for hundreds of wildlife species, including habitat needed for rare, threatened, and endangered species;

(5) Forests are susceptible to environmental degradation caused by natural threats;

(6) Forests, like other open space areas, are under intense development-related pressures for residential, commercial, and industrial conversion due to the demands of a growing population;

(7) Trees and forests in urban areas provide multiple benefits, including:

(i) Mitigation of urban stormwater runoff into the Chesapeake Bay;

(ii) Sequestration of carbon;

(iii) Avoidance of energy-related emissions;

(iv) Mitigation of air pollutants, such as ozone and particulate matter;

(v) Reduction of the urban heat island effect; and

(vi) Contributions to community livability;

(8) Forest land owners, including local government officials responsible for overseeing the management of publicly owned forest lands, could benefit from research-based education outreach programs in order to help facilitate an understanding of sustainable forestry management that is consistent with forest stewardship principles;

(9) Forests are a renewable resource that help the State meet its renewable energy goals that are consistent with the State's:

(i) Green power goal for State facilities;

(ii) Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard;

(iii) Healthy Air Act; and

(iv) Maryland Clean Energy Incentive Act of 2006; and

(10) This title sets forth Maryland's vision for sustaining Maryland's coveted forest lands into the 21st century that is consistent with the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement and the 2007 Forestry Conservation Initiative.

(b) It is the policy of the State to encourage the retention and sustainable management of [the State's privately owned] forest lands by:

(1) ACHIEVING NO NET LOSS OF FOREST ~~BY 2020~~;

[(1)] (2) Affording due consideration to the protection and retention of forests in the State through existing land conservation programs where they have the highest value in terms of promoting the State's compliance with its clean water goals under the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement and the 2007 Forest Conservation Initiative;

[(2)] (3) Enhancing the retention of privately owned forest lands through research-based educational outreach efforts to landowners by the State's forest conservancy district boards;

[(3)] (4) Developing financial incentives to encourage landowners to retain and manage their forests sustainably and in a manner that is consistent with a forest stewardship plan;

[(4)] (5) Promoting renewable energy policies and markets with increased emphasis on the use of in-State produced woody biomass;

(6) ENSURING DUAL CERTIFICATION OF THE STATE'S FORESTS BY THE FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL AND THE SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE;

[(5)] (7) Recognizing the importance of:

- Maryland;
- (i) A viable forest products industry to the economies of rural
 - (ii) Continued development of fiber products; and
 - (iii) Maryland's green infrastructure; and

[(6)] (8) Developing and enhancing programs with a sustainable forestry component, including a forest mitigation banking system, a carbon credit or carbon sequestration program, a clean water credit trading system, an environmental services credit trading program, and a renewable energy credit trading system.

5-103.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) "Construction activity" means [construction of a highway by a constructing agency] **WORK BY A CONSTRUCTING AGENCY RELATED TO:**

(I) CONSTRUCTION OF OR IMPROVEMENTS TO A HIGHWAY;
OR

(II) OFF-SITE ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION RELATED TO HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION.

(3) "Constructing agency" means:

- (i) A unit of State or local government; or
- (ii) Any other person who uses State funding and performs any construction activity with the State funding.

(e) (1) In this subsection, "Fund" means the Reforestation Fund.

(2) There is a Reforestation Fund in the Department.

(3) The purpose of the Fund is to [finance]:

(I) **FINANCE** the planting of trees on:

[(i)] 1. [State or other publicly owned lands] **LAND** located in the county and watershed in which construction projects giving rise to Fund contributions are located; and

[(ii)] 2. Private property on which trees were destroyed by a treatment to destroy plant pests that was applied by the Department of Agriculture; **AND**

(II) **FINANCE THE PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO FOREST HEALTH EMERGENCIES.**

(4) The Department shall administer the Fund.

(5) (i) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7-302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(ii) The Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately and the Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

(6) The Fund consists of any money received from contributions by a constructing agency under subsection (d) of this section.

(7) (i) Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the Fund may be used only to:

1. Plant trees on [State or other publicly owned lands] **LAND** located in the county and watershed in which construction projects giving rise to Fund contributions are located;

2. If reforestation cannot be reasonably accomplished in the county and watershed in which the construction activity is located:

A. Plant trees on State or other publicly owned lands located in the county or in the watershed in the State in which the construction activity is located; or

B. Purchase credits in, establish, or maintain a forest mitigation bank in the county or watershed in which the construction activity is located in accordance with Department regulations; [or]

3. Replace trees, except nursery stock that has not been replanted, that were destroyed by the application of a treatment applied to destroy plant pests under a quarantine imposed by the Secretary of Agriculture, whether or not the quarantine is in effect in the county or watershed where the construction activity occurred; OR

4. FINANCE THE PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO FOREST HEALTH EMERGENCIES BY:

A. MAINTAINING THE HEALTH AND VITALITY OF FOREST LAND AND URBAN TREE CANOPY; AND

B. PREVENTING OR CONTROLLING SIGNIFICANT FOREST LAND AND URBAN TREE CANOPY DEGRADATION CAUSED BY ACTS OF NATURE.

(ii) 1. Except as provided in subsubparagraph 2 of this subparagraph, moneys in the Fund may be used for administrative costs calculated in accordance with § 1-103(b)(2) of this article.

2. The Fund may not be used to finance administrative activities associated with a mitigation bank.

3. Any credits created by the Fund may not be sold to compensate for additional forest impacts.

(iii) 1. The Department shall accomplish the reforestation for which money is deposited in the Fund within [1 year or two] **2 YEARS OR THREE** growing seasons after project completion, as appropriate.

2. Money deposited in the Fund under subsection (d) of this section shall remain in the Fund for a period of [1 year or two] **2 YEARS OR THREE** growing seasons, and at the end of that time period, any portion that is not used to meet the reforestation requirements shall be returned to the constructing agency.

(8) (i) The Treasurer shall invest the money of the Fund in the same manner as other State money may be invested.

(ii) Any investment earnings of the Fund shall be credited to the General Fund of the State.

(9) Expenditures from the Fund may be made only in accordance with the State budget.

[(10) The Department may adopt regulations to implement this subsection.]

(J) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.

[5-104.

(a) The Department shall cooperate with forestry-related stakeholder groups to:

(1) Determine the meaning of no net loss of forest for the purposes of any State policy; and

(2) Develop proposals for the creation of a policy of no net loss of forest in the State.

(b) On or before December 1, 2011, the Department, in consultation with the forestry-related stakeholder groups, shall report to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Environmental Matters Committee, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on proposals for the development of statutory, budgetary, and regulatory policies to achieve no net loss of forest in the State.]

5-219.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) (i) "Reforestation" means the stocking or restocking of an area with forest tree species.

(ii) "Reforestation" includes:

1. Site preparation by mechanical operation, application of herbicides, or prescribed burning;

2. Tree planting;

3. Release of seedlings from competing vegetation;

4. Animal damage control of seedlings; and

5. Other activities that the Secretary requires.

(iii) "Reforestation" does not include the growing of Christmas or ornamental trees.

(3) (i) "Timber stand improvement" means any [precommercial] cultural operation made to improve the composition, constitution, condition, [and] **OR** increment of a timber stand **THAT DOES NOT RESULT IN IMMEDIATELY SALABLE FOREST PRODUCTS.**

(ii) "Timber stand improvement" includes [tree]:

1. **TREE** removal, girdling, poisoning, and pruning activities; **AND** [that:

1. Are not done only to help regeneration; and

2. Do not result in immediately salable forest products.]

2. **ACTIVITIES THAT IMPROVE FOREST HEALTH,**
INCLUDING:

A. EFFORTS TO CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES;

B. CREATION OR MAINTENANCE OF FORESTED
RIPARIAN BUFFERS;

C. INSTALLATION OF WATER QUALITY PROTECTION
DEVICES;

D. REDUCTION, REMOVAL, OR OTHER MANAGEMENT
OF THE RESIDUAL MATERIALS GENERATED DURING TIMBER HARVEST;

E. RESTORATION OF FOREST HABITAT AFFECTED BY
LOGGING ACCESS ROADS AND TRAILS; AND

F. OTHER HABITAT IMPROVEMENT OR BEST
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

(b) A person who owns or leases [10 to 500] **3 TO 1,000** acres of land may apply for reforestation or timber stand improvement certification under this section if the land is:

(1) Capable of growing more than 20 cubic feet of wood per acre per year; and

(2) Available for the application of scientific forest management practices for the primary purpose of growing and harvesting forest tree species.

(c) The Department shall issue an initial certification of reforestation or timber stand improvement to an applicant who owns or leases [10 to 500] **3 TO 1,000** acres of land that is used as commercial forest land or that is being restored and is capable of growing a commercial forest, if there is:

(1) A successful planting of the required minimum number of seedlings with acceptable species; or

(2) Timber stand improvement activities in accordance with a forest management plan developed by a licensed forester.

(d) (1) Within 2 years after the date of initial certification, the Department shall issue a final certification of reforestation or timber stand improvement to an applicant who received an initial certification if:

(i) Seedlings are living without other vegetation growing around or over the seedling; or

(ii) Successful timber stand improvements have been made in accordance with regulations of the Secretary.

(2) If the reforestation or timber stand improvement activities do not meet the requirements for final certification when the application is made, the applicant may replant or conduct additional timber stand improvement activities.

(e) If an application for final certification is not filed within 2 years after the date of initial certification, the applicant shall submit a plan to continue the reforestation or timber stand improvement project to the Department.

(f) The Department shall decertify land if:

(1) Reforestation or timber stand improvement activity on the land is discontinued before issuance of a final certificate;

(2) A final certificate application or a plan of continuation is not filed within 2 years after the date on which the initial certificate is issued; or

(3) The land does not continue to be used as commercial forest land for 15 years after final certification is issued.

(g) The Secretary shall:

(1) Adopt regulations to carry out this section;

(2) Provide to a certified person notice of initial and final certification that the person may file with the Comptroller as evidence of the eligibility of the

person for the income tax subtraction modification for reforestation and timberland expense allowed under §§ 10-208 and 10-308 of the Tax – General Article; and

(3) Send a copy of a decertification notice to the Comptroller for purposes of the income tax addition modification for reforestation and timberland expense required under §§ 10-205 and 10-306 of the Tax – General Article.

5-704.

(a) Any individual or corporation that willfully, maliciously, or with intent, sets on fire, or causes to be set on fire, any woods, brush, grass, grain, or stubble[, on land not his own,] is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction is subject to a fine not less than [~~\$25~~] **\$250** nor exceeding \$2,000, or imprisonment for not less than 30 days nor exceeding five years, or both with costs imposed in the discretion of the court.

(b) An individual or corporation may not carelessly or negligently set on fire, or cause to be set on fire any woods, brush, grass, grain, or stubble [resulting in damage to the property of another]. Setting a fire contrary to the provisions of this subsection[, or allowing it to escape to the injury of adjoining lands,] is prima facie proof of carelessness or neglect within the meaning of this subsection. The landowner from whose land the fire originated also is liable in a civil action for damages for injury resulting from the fire, and for the cost of fighting and extinguishing the fire, unless [he] **THE LANDOWNER** can prove to the satisfaction of the court before which the case is tried that the injury complained of was suffered without any negligence on the part of the owner or [his] **THE OWNER'S** agents.

(c) Any person who discovers a forest or brush fire not under the control of some person shall extinguish it or report it to the local fire warden.

(d) The provisions of this section do not contravene other provisions of law relating to the liability for fires of railroad companies.

5-1601.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(FF) "PRIORITY FUNDING AREA" MEANS AN AREA DESIGNATED AS A PRIORITY FUNDING AREA UNDER § 5-7B-02 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

(LL) "STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT" MEANS AN ACTIVITY THAT:

(1) IS DESIGNED TO STABILIZE STREAM BANKS OR ENHANCE STREAM FUNCTION OR HABITAT LOCATED WITHIN AN EXISTING STREAM, WATERWAY, OR FLOODPLAIN;

(2) AVOIDS AND MINIMIZES IMPACTS TO FORESTS AND PROVIDES FOR REPLANTING ON-SITE AN EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF TREES TO THE NUMBER REMOVED BY THE PROJECT;

(3) MAY BE PERFORMED UNDER A MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM PERMIT, A WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN GROWTH OFFSET, OR ANOTHER PLAN ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO ACHIEVE OR MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY STANDARDS; AND

(4) IS NOT PERFORMED TO SATISFY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT, WETLANDS MITIGATION, OR ANY OTHER REGULATORY REQUIREMENT ASSOCIATED WITH PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY.

5-1602.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, this subtitle shall apply to any public or private subdivision plan or application for a grading or sediment control permit by any person, including a unit of State or local government on areas 40,000 square feet or greater.

(b) The provisions of this subtitle do not apply to:

(10) A county that has and maintains 200,000 acres or more of its land area in forest cover; [and]

(11) The cutting or clearing of trees to comply with the requirements of 14 C.F.R. § 77.25 relating to objects affecting navigable airspace, provided that the Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the trees are a hazard to aviation;

(12) ANY STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT FOR WHICH THE APPLICANT FOR A GRADING OR SEDIMENT CONTROL PERMIT HAS EXECUTED A BINDING MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT OF AT LEAST 5 YEARS WITH THE AFFECTED PROPERTY OWNER; AND

(13) MAINTENANCE OR RETROFITTING OF A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE THAT MAY INCLUDE CLEARING OF VEGETATION OR REMOVAL AND TRIMMING OF TREES, SO LONG AS THE MAINTENANCE OR RETROFITTING IS WITHIN THE ORIGINAL LIMITS OF DISTURBANCE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE, OR WITHIN ANY MAINTENANCE EASEMENT FOR ACCESS TO THE STRUCTURE.

5-1603.

(c) (3) (ii) A local forest conservation program, when approved by the Department, may [allow]:

1. **ALLOW** clustering and other innovative land use techniques that protect and establish forests where open space is preserved, sensitive areas are protected, and development is physically concentrated; **AND**

2. **WAIVE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBTITLE FOR PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED AREAS COVERED BY IMPERVIOUS SURFACE AND LOCATED IN PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS AT THE TIME OF THE APPLICATION FOR SUBDIVISION PLAN, GRADING, OR SEDIMENT CONTROL PERMIT APPROVAL.**

(e) (1) (i) The Department shall conduct a review of each local authority's program at least once every 2 years from the date of initial departmental approval.

(ii) In its biennial review, the Department shall evaluate the level of compliance with the performance standards and required forest conservation.

(2) (I) If a local authority's program is found to be deficient by the Department, then the Department shall give notice and allow the local authority 90 days for compliance[, after which].

(II) **IF, AFTER 90 DAYS, A LOCAL AUTHORITY HAS FAILED TO COMPLY WITH THE TERMS OF A NOTICE GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT, the Department may DO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

1. [assume] **ASSUME** review and approval of all forest conservation plans within the jurisdiction of the local authority until the deficiencies are corrected;

2. **REQUIRE ON A FINDING BY AN AUDITOR MADE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL THAT A LOCAL AUTHORITY HAS MISAPPROPRIATED LOCAL FOREST CONSERVATION FUNDS, THE DEPARTMENT MAY REQUIRE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT PAYMENT TO THE STATE CONSERVATION FUND FOR THE AMOUNT OF ANY MISAPPROPRIATED LOCAL CONSERVATION FUNDS; AND**

3. **REQUEST THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL INVESTIGATE PAYMENTS AND EXPENDITURES OF FUNDS COLLECTED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

Article – Tax – General

10-208.

(a) In addition to the modification under § 10-207 of this subtitle, the amounts under this section are subtracted from the federal adjusted gross income of a resident to determine Maryland adjusted gross income.

(i) (1) The subtraction under subsection (a) of this section includes twice the amount of expenses for reforestation or timber stand improvement activity on [10 to 100] **3 TO 1,000** acres of commercial forest land, exclusive of federal funds.

(2) Of the amount under paragraph (1) of this subsection:

(i) 50% may be claimed in the taxable year in which the Department of Natural Resources issues an initial certificate of reforestation or timber stand improvement; and

(ii) 50% may be claimed in the taxable year in which the Department of Natural Resources issues a final certificate of reforestation or timber stand improvement.

SECTION 4. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That by January 1, 2015, the Department of Planning, in consultation with the Department of Natural ~~Resources and Resources~~, the Sustainable Forestry Council, and other interested parties, shall provide local jurisdictions with guidelines, recommendations, and technical assistance on policies and standards to protect forest land and urban tree canopy from ~~the~~ adverse effects ~~of development~~.

SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That nothing in this Act is intended to supplement or limit the authority of the Department of Agriculture to establish policies relating to forest land under any program regulated at the Department of Agriculture.

SECTION 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the General Assembly that:

(1) the policy of achieving no net loss of forest shall be implemented in a manner that does not incentivize the conversion of prime agricultural land with Natural Resources Conservation Service type I, II, or III soil classification to forestland, except for conservation best management practices meeting Natural Resources Conservation Service standards and specifications; but

(2) this Act may not be construed to prohibit an owner of agricultural land from voluntarily agreeing to place conservation best management practices on the property owner's agricultural land.

SECTION 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, following the release of the first statewide forest resource inventory after January 1, 2017, the Department of Natural Resources shall convene a stakeholder group comprised of representatives from local government, agriculture, forestry, development, conservation, and other interested parties to review the inventory and make recommendations in accordance with the policy goals established under § 5-102(b) of the Natural Resources Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION ~~6~~ 8. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2013.

Approved by the Governor, May 2, 2013.