

January 19, 2021

Subject: Strong Support of House Bill 80

Dear Delegate Charkoudian,

I am a resident of District 20 and am very active in environmental issues through the Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC), our neighborhood civic association (SOECA), and other groups.

I am submitting my testimony in strong support of House Bill 80. I applaud your initiative to remedy the tree destruction done to build the Purple Line. By one serious estimate, over 48 acres of forest have been lost along the PL path. Close to home, Wayne Avenue in Silver Spring has been stripped of the majestic, old trees that provided essential, cooling shade and slowed storm water runoff, which will now barrel down the steep winding slope into Sligo Creek. We have lost green infrastructure that captured carbon and filtered air pollution otherwise.

Your bill is an essential remedy for the destructive environmental consequences of the PL:

- To reduce heat island effects from the hot impervious surface that will most certainly result from the PL.
- To address the expressed goal of transforming Silver Spring into a walkable area, rather than giving lip service. If the goal of the PL and many of our other urban policies is to provide appealing, walkable areas, taking away shade and increasing heat island effects will undermine those goals. Who, for example, wants to walk on Wayne Avenue now ?
- To help improve storm water management. Impervious surfaces - like the surfaces of the PL - make storm water runoff a nightmare, particularly during intense rainstorms (which are pretty common these days). The elimination of our mature tree canopy (the gold standard of storm water management) has make conditions far worse and even dangerous for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

It is also important to protect Sligo Creek, the Anacostia Watershed and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, which the network of water ways drains into.

- To improve carbon capture. Trees capture and store carbon, as does a healthy soil. They are essential tools in our efforts to reverse climate change.

I would also urge you and the Committee to recognize that planting one young tree to take the place of a mature tree that has been taken down is a false equivalence. I would suggest that the bill require an equivalence that exceeds 1:1.

I often wonder whether the PL construction would have been approached differently if environmental economists had calculated on net how much carbon would be released and what future carbon capture would be sacrificed from destroying 48 acres of forest through PL construction, so that we would all have a fuller picture of environmental impacts. Stormwater management consequences could also have been calculated. On my wish list is that all projects require this net carbon calculation and storm water management calculation as part of its Environmental Impact Statement, before moving ahead.

Thank you very much for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Anne Vorce
District 20
Silver Spring, Md 20910