

January 19, 2021

Committee Chair Barve
And House Environmental and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, MD

Subject: **In support of HB0080 - Department of Transportation and Department of the Environment - Purple Line Tree Replacement Plan**

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support of HB0080** to require MDOT to replace trees lost to construction in communities along the Purple Line route. I live in East Bethesda, a neighborhood adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail, which has seen considerable tree canopy loss due to Purple Line construction. Between Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue alone there has been close to 5 acres of forest stand loss and an additional 3.3 acres of tree loss associated with the project. Currently, planned replanting in many areas is minimal.

Overall, the Purple Line has led to the loss of over 40 acres of valuable tree canopy in downcounty Montgomery County and Prince Georges County. In 2016, I visited the “forest bank” in Barnesville used for the project after doing research into where the mitigation was occurring (a second mitigation forest bank is located in Accokeek Maryland). These banks consist of existing forest nearly an hour away from where forest was removed and are in completely different watersheds from where trees were removed. (Please note the recent State AG opinion on the Forest Conservation Law regarding use of existing forest for forest banking). While it is positive those parcels of forest are protected, they do not help to shade and cool local neighborhoods or to provide pleasant tree lined sidewalks and streets for walking and biking to and from Purple Line stations.

I have also traveled the entirety of the Purple Line route from Bethesda to New Carrollton three times in the past two years – with both the limits of disturbance maps and the landscape plans in hand. The lack of tree canopy along much of the route – currently and planned in the future - is absolutely disheartening.

HB0080 will go a long way to help remedy the situation and is the least the state should do to insure there is needed tree canopy replacement in local neighborhoods impacted by the project.

Thank you for a favorable consideration of HB0080.

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