



**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Testimony on:** HB0080 - “Department of Transportation and Department of the Environment-Purple Line Tree Replacement Plan”

**Organization:** MLC Climate Justice Wing

**Person**

**Submitting:** Diana Younts, co-chair

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** January 21, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0080. MLC’s Climate Justice Wing is a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and grasstops organizations focused on getting State level climate justice legislation passed. Each bill for which we advocate is evaluated through an equity lens, with a particular focus on how disadvantaged communities are affected by the bill and the bill’s climate impact.

We are testifying today to urge you to vote favorably for HB0080--a bill that would require the replacement of the trees removed by the construction of the Purple Line in the same communities from which the trees were removed.

Construction of the Purple Line required the removal of large mature trees. While the overall plan required replacement of these trees, they were replaced in areas far from the communities which lost them. Many of the areas which lost trees were areas already suffering from heat island effects and poor air quality. Walking and biking along these corridors for transit dependent individuals is even hotter and more unpleasant without these trees. While these trees cannot be replaced in the exact locations from which they were removed, they can be replaced in the same neighborhoods on a combination of state, county, and private land. This legislation requires the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Department of the Environment to coordinate this effort across multiple state and local agencies to replant trees in these communities, with a priority on replanting in communities suffering multiple environmental health harms.

The eastern portion of the Purple Line alignment in Silver Spring and Takoma Park includes areas ranked in the top 50% most vulnerable by the CDC social vulnerability index. Areas in the western portion of the alignment in Bethesda are projected to experience more days over 95 degrees than the rest of the County under various climate change scenarios. Therefore, replacing trees lost due to Purple Line construction in the surrounding neighborhoods is critical from both the perspective of disproportionate climate-related heat increases and impacts to some of the most socially vulnerable areas of the County. (see draft Montgomery County Climate Action Plan, [Appendix C - Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#).) We do not have data for Prince Georges' County, but it is likely at least similarly affected by the depletion of the tree canopy.

For these reasons we urge you to vote favorably for HB0080.