



COMMITTEE: Finance

TESTIMONY ON: SB0359 - Department of Transportation and Department of the Environment – Purple Line Tree Replacement Plan

POSITION: Favorable

HEARING DATE: February 3, 2021

BILL CONTACT: Senator Jim Rosapepe

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment. DTMG strongly supports SB0359 because it will help return a clean and healthy environment to neighborhoods and communities disrupted by years of construction on the Purple Line.

Construction of the 16-mile Purple Line light rail line from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George’s County required the removal of many 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 now 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.

SB0359 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.

Trees capture CO₂, a greenhouse gas, thereby mitigating climate change, release oxygen, and provide cooling shade. Replacement of trees will increase the health of the environment and the health and quality of life of residents in the Purple Line corridor. SB0359 therefore addresses both the environment and social justice and equity.

For these reasons, DTMG strongly supports SB0359 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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