



ASSOCIATION OF FOREST INDUSTRIES, INC.

P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639



SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 1031

Land Conservation – Establishment of Goals and Programs 3 (Maryland the Beautiful Act)

March 2, 2022

The Maryland Forests Association and the Association of Forest Industries – Maryland’s two leading voices for the forest products industry, inclusive of landowners, sawmills, loggers, consultants, and primary/secondary manufacturers – support House Bill 1031.

Enactment of House Bill 1031 will, among other things, result in a cleaner Chesapeake Bay because of the proposed \$1 million mandated appropriation to the *Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund* as explained herein. Maryland’s forest community stands in unified support.

Maryland enacted America’s most nationally acclaimed pro-sustainable forestry law in 2009 -- ***Sustainable Forestry Act*** -- which declared that a healthy forest means a healthy Chesapeake Bay. With billions of taxpayer dollars being invested in Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts, promoting sustainable forestry management – consistent with and responsive to the ***Sustainable Forestry Act*** – is critical for Maryland’s compliance with its targeted P and N reduction goals, including sediment reduction resulting from harmful runoff.

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2009rs/bills/sb/sb0549t.pdf>

Not included in the historic 2009 Act was a funding mechanism to help underwrite the statutorily mandated mission of the *Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund* which reads, per NR §5-307, as follows:

(g) The Department shall use the Fund:

- (1) To help fund the Woodland Incentives Program and the cost–share assistance established under this subtitle;
- (2) To fund the Mel Noland Fellowship Program established under this subtitle;
- (3) For administrative costs calculated in accordance with § 1–103(b)(2) of this article;
- (4) To offset the costs of the Forest and Park Service for developing and approving forest stewardship plans on privately owned forest lands;
- (5) To provide annual grants to the forest conservancy district boards under § 5–605 of this title, to help facilitate their respective outreach efforts to encourage forest land owners to develop forest stewardship and other forest conservation management plans;
- (6) To establish a forest health emergency contingency program to help:

- (i) Maintain the health and vitality of publicly owned and privately owned forest lands; and
 - (ii) Prevent or control large degradation caused by natural threats;
- (7) To provide financial assistance, as provided in the State budget, for the administration of an urban and community forestry program established under § 5–426 of this title, including:
 - (i) Increasing the number of communities with tree canopy goals;
 - (ii) Facilitating compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Program’s forestry targets;
 - (iii) Supporting the use of urban tree canopy expansion for air quality improvement purposes; and
 - (iv) Helping achieve implementation of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative offset opportunities in urban areas;
- (8) To help fund a forest marketing and utilization program in the Department to provide financial assistance to help support, stimulate, and market innovative and creative ways to enhance the production of value-added wood products;
- (9) To help the Department, in cooperation with appropriate public and private sector entities, develop and expand:
 - (i) A forest mitigation banking system;
 - (ii) A carbon credit or carbon sequestration program;
 - (iii) A clean water credit trading system;
 - (iv) An environmental services credit trading program; and
 - (v) A renewable energy credit trading system; and
- (10) To help offset administrative costs for providing staff assistance to the Sustainable Forestry Council established under § 5–204 of this title.

At present, the only funding for the *Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund* is provided in § 13–306 of the Tax – Property Article whereby “up to \$200,000 annually of the proceeds of the tax imposed by § 13–302 of the Tax – Property Article that are attributable to the taxation of instruments of writing that transfer title to parcels of land that are entirely woodland”...on average \$88,500 annually according to DNR. The balance is credited to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF).

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, Maryland’s forest community is eternally grateful to the Honorable Eric Luedtke and Dana Stein for their Leadership in sponsoring House Bill 1031, especially with respect to the mandated appropriation to the *Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund* which represents an historic “First” in allowing the **Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009** to FINALLY comply with NR §5-307 resulting in a healthier forest and Chesapeake Bay, respectively. We would argue it’s the best taxpayer investment in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort to date.

Beth Hill
 Maryland Forests Association
beth@mdforests.org
 410/463-1755

Bill Miles
 Association of Forest Industries
billmilesmd@comcast.net
 443/404-7449