



*Forming Faithful Stewards,
Caring for Sacred Waters*

501 Sixth Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21403

February 18, 2019

Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

House Bill 735 – Task Force on Forest Conservation

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake to express our support of House Bill 735 to assemble a **Task Force on Forest Conservation**.

It is shocking to read that in the eight years prior to 2017, Maryland lost over 14,000 acres of forest. This is occurring in our state at a time when the world is warming. ***How is this allowed to happen?***

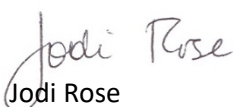
In just the past year-and-a-half, or so, since similar Task Force legislation failed in the 2018 General Assembly, an additional 2,600 acres of forest have been lost – and that is likely a low estimate because some counties such as Montgomery failed to submit their annual report on forest losses. ***How is this allowed to happen?***

In Charles County, a solar project is being sited on forested land and could lead to the lost of 200+ acres of forest. ***Is this a bad thing? Are the hidden costs of lost forest outweighed by the benefits of solar?***

We can't seem to agree on the answers to these questions because lawmakers can't agree on what data to use in their discernment. This is why we need House Bill 735. We need to put to rest the thinly-veiled excuse that we can't fight for the next generation's clean air and clean water because we can't agree on the *data* to use.

We are literally stealing hundreds of thousands of trees from the next generation, and it's time we hold ourselves accountable to that. Attached is a list of people-of-faith from throughout Maryland who have signed on in support of this bill. They are all fighting for their children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews who are voiceless in this battle for cooler air and a healthy environment. Please fight to protect our forests by supporting House Bill 735.

Sincerely,


Jodi Rose

Executive Director

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (not a member-based organization)