



January 19, 2021

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

Subject: In support of House Bill 80 - Department of Transportation and Department of the Environment - Purple Line Tree Replacement Plan

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members,

On behalf of Friends of Sligo Creek, I **strongly support HB0080** to replace trees lost to our communities as part of Purple Line construction. While we support transit, we have consistently and strongly supported efforts to make the project more environmentally friendly, including by planting trees in the general area of the Purple Line, and requiring stormwater retrofits for the entire disturbed surface of construction. We are on two CAT committees giving advice to Purple Line officials over years' time, as the route crosses several miles of Sligo Creek watershed and the creek itself.

Many residents in the Silver Spring area have been horrified by the loss of significant tree canopy on the route. They become further outraged when they discover there is affirmatively no plan to replant trees even in the general vicinity of canopy loss. We agree with Maryland's Attorney General that MTA's tree loss mitigation was illegal to just purchase 83 acres of existing forest away from the Purple Line. See:

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Opinions%20Documents/2020/105oF066%20.pdf>

While we understand that trees cannot be replanted inside the "limit of disturbance" because of the catenary wire system, with a bit of funding and passage of HB0080, trees could be planted in the vicinity of the loss, significantly improving quality of life and environment in these communities. Silver Spring and Langley Park are diverse racially and economically, making equity measures a great priority here.

The significant tree and forest loss we are suffering in general magnifies the effects of climate change in this climate emergency. Our state must step up and make sure valuable trees are replaced in the subwatershed where they were destroyed, in this relatively urbanized area.

Friends of Sligo Creek, or FOSC, is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving, and appreciating the ecological health of Sligo Creek Park and its surrounding watershed.

Thank you for moving HB0080 out of committee with a favorable review.

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