

January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Honorable Christopher Stolle  
Honorable Daniel Marshall  
Honorable Tony Wilt  
Honorable Keith Hodges  
Honorable Michael Webert  
Honorable Mike Mullin  
Honorable Cliff Hayes  
Honorable Danica Roem  
Honorable Riley Ingram

During the 2018 General Assembly session, you extended to all localities within the Chesapeake Bay watershed the authority to adopt ordinances requiring the planting or replacement of trees during the development process. That measure was an important first step in recognizing the important role trees play in the health of our waterways, air and neighborhoods. However, that legislation did not go far enough: It continues to tie localities' hands by imposing specific limits on tree canopy requirements, hindering their authority to harness trees to achieve water quality and water quantity goals.

These limits fail to consider the important services trees provide in our developed communities. Trees can cost-effectively reduce polluted runoff to help localities faced with challenging Chesapeake Bay stormwater goals. Similarly, in coastal and other communities threatened by storm surges and localized flooding, localities recognize trees as a valuable strategy to increase their resiliency to sea level rise. Virginia's statute shouldn't limit the tools that a locality has at its disposal to protect its citizens and infrastructure.

Delegate Keam's HB2333 would exempt localities from these restrictions on tree planting, replacement and preservation to help meet water quality or water quantity objectives.

Localities have significant responsibility for managing polluted runoff. Let's give them every tool available to improve water quality, reduce flooding and improve their communities. Please provide local governments the authority to preserve and enhance tree canopies following new development or redevelopment by voting in favor of HB2333.

Sincerely,

*[Sign-on organizations]*