

November 27, 2023

Hon. Evan Glass
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Bill 40-23, Tree Canopy and Roadside Tree Requirements - Fee Revisions – Support with Amendments

Dear President Glass and Council Members:

The Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA) is submitting testimony in response to Bill 40-23, which seeks to adjust the current fee for removing roadside county trees to reflect the cost of the tree as well as the environmental impact of the removal. The industry appreciates the intent of the legislation and acknowledges the changing market since the program's inception. It is a great program that the county offers, which many of our members and clients take advantage of and we want to make sure it is able to continue in a sufficient manor.

However, we do have concerns about the increase amount proposed. This is a major increase for most builders who cannot meet the required planting ratio based on square footage. Most already pencil in the max fee in lieu (FIL) cost which is \$3,700 and this is not including street trees, the new figure is now \$7,400 to the cost of a home.

We are proposing the below amendments to Bill 40-23:

- \$350 for the first year and then \$450 for the second year
- Followed by subsequent increases based on the lower of the CPI index vs a competitive rebid

This is necessary since many builders already have signed contracts under the existing fee over the next twelve months, also easing the burden of the fee increase and allowing builders/applicants to prepare.

The industry appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on Bill 40-23 and would ask respectfully that the council consider these amendments to the proposal. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Griffin Benton