



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

February 23, 2013

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

SUBJECT: SSCAB's ADVICE RE TREE CANOPY CONSERVATION LAW

To County Executive Leggett and County Council President Navarro:

The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board is writing to support the goals of the Montgomery County Tree Canopy Conservation Law while also expressing the need to strengthening the legislation.

On January 28 the SSCAB Transportation, Environment and Energy (TREE) Committee held a public meeting to discuss the proposed Montgomery County Tree Canopy Conservation Law. We had a lively discussion with all interested parties to ensure that all sides of the issue were expressed. By the end of the meeting there was a general consensus among Silver Spring residents in support of the goals of the bill. However there was also general agreement for the need to strengthen the bill so that it truly protects and increases the tree canopy in Silver Spring.

Committee members voiced concerns that the bill does not go far enough to protect trees. One recommendation to improve the legislation is to require that any tree removed be replanted on the property on which it was extracted or at a minimum in the near vicinity. Residents believe that the replanting of trees within a close proximity of their site of removal should be the main purpose of any tree canopy bill, as opposed to creating a fee that will support tree planting somewhere else in the region. To further the goal of maintaining existing trees, we recommend that the County provide incentives for homeowners and builders to retain and maintain healthy trees on their property.

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There is a real need for a rational and comprehensive tree canopy policy that enables residents to cut down dying and unhealthy trees, while protecting healthy trees and promoting the planting trees in areas with minimum canopies. According to a 2009 University of Vermont study for the Montgomery County Planning Department the CBD of Silver Spring has only a 14% tree canopy. This is unacceptable and there must be action taken to increase the tree canopy throughout the entire Silver Spring area.

We urge the County to pass legislation which gets to the root of this serious issue. A healthy tree canopy enhances health and well-being among residents, improves property values and enhances the aesthetic value of the County. As Silver Spring and surrounding areas continue to develop in both commercial and residential sectors, there is a real need for strong legislation to protect and increase tree canopy and green space.

Thank you for your consideration.



Evan Glass
Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

cc:
Montgomery County Council
Robert Hoyt, Director, Department of Environmental Protection