



Dear MCP-Chair and Board Members,

Please add MCA to the growing list of organizations and residents who support collaboration in advancing the strongest possible amendments to the County's forest conservation law. We are grateful for this conversation and look forward to the opportunity to work together with staff to craft a solid set of recommended amendments. We respectfully ask that the board direct further effort to the good work staff has conducted thus far to include complementary recommendations crafted over the last 2 years by the multi-stakeholder Montgomery County Forest Coalition. The resulting amendments would represent our best and needed update that would elevate Montgomery County as a model jurisdiction in forest conservation and climate change mitigation.

I am submitting the following for inclusion for the record. The Forest Coalition proposed amendments are attached and the introduction reads:

Description: The need for forest ecosystem management is already acknowledged in the Montgomery County Code. This language will add a requirement to include in the technical manual how forest ecosystem establishment should occur. The technical manual could include requirements for drainage, establishing healthy soil including mycorrhizal fungal networks, importing topsoil, planting a diversity of tree species that will grow to different heights and planting understory shrubs in later years of required maintenance, and other techniques that a developer can take to accelerate and support establishing a forest ecosystem.

A summary of the top recommendations of the Montgomery County Forest Coalition recommendations for the update to the County's forest conservation law are attached for your convenience.

Further background: [Climate Workgroup Recommendations](#)

Reads in part:

Montgomery County's net GHG emissions could be lower if additional forests and trees were added to its land base, or if losses of these resources were reduced further.

In general, it is important to consider that these estimates represent a relatively short period of time compared with the long-term consequences of policy decisions and land management actions. For example, a forest converted to settlement represents a permanent loss of removal capacity. Over the long term, maintaining forests will sustain a higher rate of carbon removal, depending on age-related growth rates and occurrence of disturbances.

[CBF on Forest Loss](#)

Excerpt:

From capturing and filtering out pollution before it enters our waterways to alleviating flooding by stabilizing the soil, trees provide countless health, economic, and environmental benefits. Despite their value, they continue to disappear at an alarming rate, and efforts to restore them are lagging. At a time when states, counties, and municipalities are struggling to meet water quality goals, planting trees remains one of the most successful and cost-effective solutions to reducing polluted runoff and cleaning local waterways.

<https://www.wri.org/insights/forests-ipcc-special-report-land-use-7-things-know>

[IPCC special report](#) Excerpt:

Indeed, according to the report, improved forest management is one of only nine response options (out of 40 total) with medium to large benefits for all five challenges covered by the report: mitigation, adaptation, desertification, land degradation and food security. And reduced deforestation and degradation is one of only five response options that offer large mitigation potential without risking trade-offs to solving the other challenges. The report also notes that preserving and restoring forests and peatlands and other options that do not require land use change provide almost exclusively positive impacts on sustainable development, such as reducing poverty and hunger and enhancing health, clean water and sanitation.