



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Horacio Tablada, Secretary
Suzanne E. Dorsey, Deputy Secretary

December 1, 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health and
Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environmental & Transportation
Committee
251 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: Growing 5 Million Trees in Maryland Progress Report 2021-2022

Dear Chair Pinsky and Chair Barve:

Per the Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) is required to submit a report, on or before December 1 of each year, on the progress toward meeting goals established in the legislation. The following subsections address the significant steps being made by MDE and the Maryland Commission for the Innovation and Advancement of Carbon Markets and Sustainable Tree Plantings (the Commission):

Carbon Markets and Trees Commission

Since 2021, MDE has provided leadership and coordination for the [Commission](#). In October 2022, the Commission released its final plan for [Growing 5 Million Trees in Maryland](#). This plan reflects considerable interagency coordination, planning, and implementation. Additionally, the plan [provides a roadmap](#) for success that builds on Maryland's existing investments in climate action, ecosystem restoration, and forest management.

Cross-agency Tree Program and Data Coordination

In addition to providing staff support for the Commission, MDE has facilitated cross-agency tree programs and data coordination. Leadership from implementing agencies, including MDE, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust), have met monthly, and will continue internal coordination to support aligned implementation and outreach. In fall 2022, MDE also established an interagency Tree Data Advisory Council to facilitate consistent tree accounting and data management.

Progress Tracking and Outreach

MDE received FY23 funding from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund to stand up new tree tracking and accounting tools. MDE has contracted with the Maryland Environmental Services and University of Maryland College Park to support the agency's work to promote, facilitate, and align the state's efforts to achieve the state's 5 million tree carbon mitigation goal. Through DNR's grant, MDE and its contractors are: 1) establishing a central 5 million trees website

and GIS-based tree tracking tool, 2) coordinating with data providers, performing quality checks on submitted tree planting data, and reporting progress, and 3) quantifying and integrating the carbon value of these 5 million trees within the state's existing forest carbon monitoring system [under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act and related Greenhouse Gas inventory](#). These projects are in process with a beta website and tracking tool expected in early 2023.

Trees in the Ground

Since fall 2021, lead implementing agencies and organizations have reported nearly 250,000 trees in the ground. This collective effort includes more than 156,256 trees from DNR programs, 88,400 trees on agricultural lands supported through MDA's Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program and Conservation Buffer Initiative, 3,039 trees under the Trust's new Urban Trees Program, and 500 trees through MDOT's Urban Tree Program. Moving forward, MDE's new 5 million trees website will serve as the central point of data collection and dissemination, and support near real time progress tracking and reporting. Outreach and training events planned for spring 2023 will support private organizations in submitting qualifying tree planting activities through the 5 million trees tracking site.

External Recognition

MDE and its agency partners have leveraged the state's tree planting commitment as [a pledge toward the U.S. chapter of 1 Trillion Trees Initiative](#). As one of the first state governments to make this pledge on an international stage, this effort has been featured at the United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties ([COP27](#)), championed with partners at the [Women's Forest Congress](#), and highlighted in [U.S. Climate Alliance](#) resources on planning for net zero climate mitigation goals. Maryland is also the [first state in the nation](#) to utilize a remote sensing based forest carbon monitoring system, with the science used to support carbon quantification and tracking also highlighted by the the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Carbon Monitoring System at COP27, and recent annual meetings of the [American Geophysical Union](#).

If you have any questions on the Commission or the implementation of the Trees Solutions Now Act of 2021, please contact me or Dr. Rachel Lamb, Agency Lead of Natural Carbon Sequestration at Rachel.Lamb@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Horacio Tablada
Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)
Rachel Lamb, MDE Agency Lead, Natural Carbon Sequestration