



ALLIANCE
FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Forest Conservation consistently finds broad citizen support

A special message for Alliance organizations and guests...



A large bipartisan majority of Anne Arundel citizens have shown support for Forest Conservation in several different venues

A very recent OpinionWorks poll has shown that more than 76% of Anne Arundel County voters support Forest Conservation Bill 68-19 in the form originally submitted. Only 8% oppose the bill. In follow-up questions, the poll found that 84% of voters agree that every tree that is taken down when land is developed should be replanted and 74% agree that developers should pay the full cost of replanting. An additional poll question was asked that reveals the growing conflict between the profit-oriented development community and the much larger proportion of County citizens that highly value forest ecosystems. This question found that 78% of residents support the statement that "For too long, developers in Anne Arundel County have been allowed to get away with whatever they want to do. We need to do a better job protecting forested areas". Click [here](#) to see a detailed summary of the poll.

At the Forest Conservation Town Hall held on August 20, similar broad support for the bill was evident. The meeting was attended by an estimated 150 participants, about 26 of whom offered comments. Opposition to the bill was suggested by only 3 of the attendees, with explicit support or suggestions for improvement stated by 23. A variety of information questions regarding details of the bill were also raised. The video record of the meeting may be viewed at [this link](#), which confirms the broadly supportive tone of the meeting.

A Forest Conservation rally prior to the October 7 Council hearing of Bill 68-19 was attended by an estimated 200 supporters of the bill. Afterward the Council chambers were filled to standing room only, and more than 100 rally attendees were prevented by the fire marshal from entering the room. Many were unable to testify at the hearing that lasted until nearly midnight.

The seventeen GDP visioning sessions and follow-up survey heavily relied on essay responses by participants that are difficult to summarize with simple statistics. However, a rapid scan of the summary data from the follow-up survey ([click to view](#)) and from the visioning sessions themselves provides insight into the general perspective

of participants. Extensive comments are encountered regarding the need to restrict irresponsible development and to protect the health of forests and waters in the County. There is almost no support for the destruction of forest ecosystems of any size to allow residential or commercial development of any type.

A statewide OpinionWorks poll was conducted in conjunction with the Forest Conservation bills introduced to the state legislature in the early part of 2019. The poll results, which can be reviewed [here](#), showed that Maryland voters favored forest protection by an 87% margin, even at a cost to growth and development. In spite of this overwhelming voter support, however, a well-funded and highly-organized development lobby was able to stymie a "No Net Loss" bill in a House committee.

With broad voter support Forest Conservation Bill 68-19 now comes before the Anne Arundel County Council. The vocal and well-organized development lobby seems to be drawing from experience in its state campaign to launch a determined resistance to every aspect of the bill. However, it is clear that the core issue is about money -- how much of a forest ecosystem should a developer be allowed to destroy in order to maximize profit.

The Alliance encourages Council members to represent the wishes of the large majority of their constituents and vote for the Forest Conservation Bill without weakening amendments or extensive delays.

Take Action

There will be no further opportunity for citizen testimony on Bill 68-19 unless it is amended. If there are no amendments, the bill can be defeated on Oct. 21. Please ask your Alliance organization members to contact their County Council representatives by telephone or email to urge their support of this important legislation.

Upcoming Council meeting

October 21, 7 pm. Bill 68-19, Forest Conservation, will be reopened for Council consideration. No opportunity for public input unless amendments are introduced and passed.

About the Alliance

The Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities is a non-partisan coalition of 25 local and state organizations advocating for sustainable growth and environmental protections to safeguard and enhance residents' quality of life.

Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities



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