

Dear County Council Members,

I am writing to urge that you support the Forest Preservation Ordinance 26-05. Forests play a critical role in Sussex County by providing flood mitigation and wildlife habitat, protecting aquifers and watersheds, and cooling the atmosphere. Healthy trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air, filtering out pollutants and improving air quality, thus providing health benefits to Sussex County residents.

Sussex is the only Delmarva county without some form of forest protection within new developments. The Land Use Reform Working Group recognized this lack and the importance of protecting our forests with their #13 recommendation to:

- Establish clear, enforceable forest retention minimums: 50% in Conservation Areas and 30% in Growth Areas, with mitigation ratios for any removal.
- Refine the definition of “forest” to protect meaningful stands of mature trees and prioritize ecological value over tree counts.
- Create a predictable, value-based framework that reduces forest loss and protects habitat.

I would further urge that you put in place mitigation formulas that ensure no forest beyond the required retention amounts be removed except for essential purposes, and that additional requirements be enacted for tree-planting within developments.

Development pressure has resulted in the loss of 43,000 acres of trees in Sussex County over the past 25 years. I urge you to pass the Forest Preservation Ordinance, to protect the forests that we have left and to minimize the detrimental effects of development activity.

Respectfully,
your name
your address
your phone number

cc:
Doug Hudson
John Rieley
Steve McCarron
Jane Gruenebaum
Matt Lloyd