

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-021-2024

Draft No.: 2

Committee: TIEE

Date: 3/26/2024

Action: FAV(A)

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable as Amended, 5-0 (In Favor: Council Members Olson, Harrison, Burroughs, Dernoga, and Fisher).

The Committee convened on March 26, 2024, to discuss CB-21-2024, which is part of a legislative package (along with CB-20-2024 and CB-22-2024) proposing updates to Subtitle 25 (Trees & Vegetation) and Subtitle 24 (Subdivision Ordinance) of the County Code. These changes are needed to implement the required program changes outlined in the Maryland Forest Conservation Act (FCA) of 2023 (SB 526/ HB 723-2023) as approved by the Governor on May 8, 2023. The overarching goals of the changes include no net loss of forest (and even to demonstrate gain), simplifying the clearing replacement calculations, and making the process more transparent to the public.

CB-21-2024 amends Division 3 of Subtitle 25 (Tree Canopy Cover Ordinance), proposing building and grading permit compliance at 2,500 square feet of gross floor area of disturbance, (lowered from 5,000 square feet). CB-21 also exempts agricultural activities and agricultural support structures from the Tree Canopy Coverage provision. The legislation also proposes the application of the requirements on a “net tract” basis rather than the current “gross tract” basis, which excludes the floodplain areas from canopy coverage calculation.

Staff proposed technical amendments to the bill title, as well as substantive amendments, to include a grandfather provision for landscape plans approved as part of an entitlement case, subjecting these plans to the regulations in place at the time of approval. Staff also proposed an amendment to clarify the effective date. The Committee voted favorably on all amendments.

After discussion, the Committee voted favorably on CB-21-2024 as amended by a vote of 5-0.