

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3211

May 18, 2021

House Committee on Agriculture
Malliotakis Member Day Testimony

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Thompson:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to come before you today and present my testimony regarding a bipartisan piece of legislation I introduced - H.R.2477 the Urban Forests Act. Urban forests are important sources of carbon sequestration and have already sequestered nearly 130 million metric tons of carbon in 2018. In addition to carbon sequestration, urban forests also provide numerous other benefits to communities including job creation, reduction in air pollution and stormwater runoff, mitigation of the heat island effect, and reductions in home energy costs for consumers. This multitude of benefits means that for every \$1 invested in urban forestry, it can provide \$2-\$4 in returns.

The Urban Forests Act of 2021:

- Creates a competitive matching grant program based on the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA Program to enhance and maintain urban forests, particularly for communities with low tree or environmental equity.
- Supports local job creation through Job Corps by establishing Civilian Conservation Centers in urban areas to teach important technical skills related to urban forestry.
- Creates a new pilot project that incentivizes innovative products made from urban wood sources.
- Adds carbon sequestration as a goal of the Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program and to the Ten-Year Urban Forestry Action Plan.
- Reauthorizes the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council Increases the authorization of appropriations for the Urban and Community Forestry Program to \$50 million for 5 years.
- Improves data collected on urban forests through the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program Coordinates existing urban forestry programs and research areas between different departments and agencies.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, our constituents are asking for solutions. The Urban Forests Act may not fix the issue of Climate Change, but it most certainly a bipartisan step in the right direction and should be part of the larger global conversation. This legislation has received support from the National Association of State Foresters and the Arbor Day Foundation.

I look forward to working with you and thank you for your time.

I yield back.