



Written Testimony on B25-487 and B25-472

Chairperson Allen,

I write on behalf of the members of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA), expressing our support for B25-487, the Office of Natural Area Conservation Establishment Act – and creating an Office of Natural Area Conservation. Similarly, on B25-472: the Tree Preservation Enhancement Amendment Act, while we favor reducing the Special tree size threshold, we do not support creating an option to remove Heritage trees.

The BNCA is an all-volunteer, non-profit association that exists to advocate for and improve the quality of life of the Brookland neighborhood. With roughly 200 members, most of whom are residents of Brookland, as well as many local businesses and property owners, we strive, in coordination with our local ANCs, to represent the views of the entire community on issues of common concern.

Preserving and expanding the city's tree canopy and green space is a central concern to the Brookland community and to communities across the city. A vibrant tree canopy not only makes Washington more beautiful, but it also makes our city cleaner, healthier, and most resilient to climate change. Trees purify our air, filter our stormwater, and provide shade that reduces the urban heat island effect. Along with these environmental impacts, an expanded tree canopy also helps District residents save on energy costs. A DDOT report found that reaching the city's 40 percent tree canopy goal would lower energy costs for District residents by more than \$3.5 million.

Creating an Office of Natural Area Conservation provides the city government an important new tool to preserve our green space. However, the proposed provision that would allow Heritage tree removal should be moved pending further study and discussion on how to manage Heritage trees. We need to protect both our young and old trees to have a healthy, generational canopy across the city.

Thank you for considering these bills.

Sincerely,

Stephen Farole
President, Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association
brooklandcivic@yahoo.com