

**THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
PRESS RELEASE**

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**ACTING DIRECTOR TO APOINT SPECIAL TASK FORCE TO REVIEW, ASSESS  
FOREST CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – Acting Director of the Montgomery County Department of Planning Faroll Hamer announced today that she will establish a special task force to examine how the department implements its forest conservation program and will ask the group for recommendations to improve the program and make it a national model of excellence.

In 1992, the Montgomery County Council passed landmark legislation that has protected thousands of acres of forest and helped make Montgomery County a leader in environmental protection.

However, the cumulative pace of development, the complexity of applications and the mounting caseload of violations in the county has made administration of this important program more difficult.

“At the end of the day, our goal for the task force is to help us ensure that the program and its provisions are clearer, stronger and more enforceable than they are today,” said Hamer. “We know we must be more consistent in applying the law.”

The task force will work through December 2006 to review how the program is managed, administered and staffed at M-NCPPC. The group will also examine how the agency handles alleged forest conservation law violations, review the 1992 forest conservation law and make recommendations on how to clarify the provisions within the law.

Hamer will call on key individuals from the civic, environmental and development communities to participate in the task force. While the task force is not yet fully formed, groups that will be invited to join the effort include the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Rodgers and Associates, the Audubon Naturalist Society, the Sierra Club, Linowes and Blocher, and Alliance Homes.

Staff organizers of the task force anticipate the first monthly meeting to be scheduled within the next two weeks. The public and the media are invited to attend and listen in on the progress.

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