



**Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development**  
**Committee on International Justice and Peace**

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April 12, 2021

The Honorable Mike Braun  
374 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Todd Young  
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Angus King  
133 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators:


I write in support of the Trillion Trees and Natural Carbon Storage Act (S. 4985 in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress). This bipartisan effort promotes natural carbon sequestration while protecting old growth forests and ecosystems. Protecting, restoring, and growing our forests is a key part of addressing climate change and safeguarding biodiversity, and acknowledges that these ecosystems “have an intrinsic value independent of their usefulness” which Pope Francis articulated in his 2015 encyclical on ecology, *Laudato si’* (no. 140).

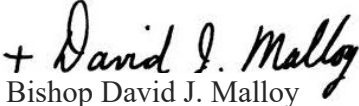
Natural carbon sequestration promotes environmental healing written into the book of creation, a testament to the power of nature itself to increase climate resilience. This bill would give much-needed support to nature-based climate solutions by planting new trees, and is an improvement on a previous version because it includes the protection and rehabilitation of old growth forests and restoration of existing ecosystems (cf. *Laudato si’*, no. 39).

The holistic approach to carbon sequestration in the bill is also directed towards international collaboration. Many poor rural communities in the developing world have been completely denuded of trees, leading to the erosion of topsoil vital for agriculture and the loss of natural water filtration for drinking water tables. The promotion and protection of forests include these added benefits along with improving the earth’s biodiversity and carbon storage capacity.

The Trillion Trees and Natural Carbon Storage Act is based on the acknowledgment of our shared moral responsibility to work proactively to heal and mitigate environmental damage. The planting of new trees, the protection of ecosystems, and the rehabilitation of damaged forests are all part of our call to cooperate with God’s providential design in the work of ecological healing. Thank you for your bipartisan efforts to support the Trillion Trees initiative at home and abroad.

Sincerely,

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Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley  
Archbishop of Oklahoma City  
Chair, Committee on Domestic Justice  
and Human Development

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Bishop David J. Malloy  
Bishop of Rockford  
Chair, Committee on International Justice  
and Peace