May 13, 2015

The Honorable Mary Cheh, Chair
Committee on Transpiration and the Environment
1250 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20004

Dear Councilmember Cheh:

Casey Trees is a DC nonprofit with a mission “to restore, enhance, and protect the tree canopy of the nation’s capital.” In your review of the District Department of Transportation’s FY2016 proposed budget, please consider the following considerations in financing the Urban Forestry Administration.

Casey Trees applauds the District’s commitment to increase tree canopy. We believe the city’s 40% tree canopy goal is achievable by 2032 if the city continues to invest in green infrastructure programs.

To reach 40%, each year for the next 17 years, the city and its partners must collectively plant 10,648 trees while keeping the city’s mature trees alive. The council can ensure that we continue to reach this city-wide tree planting target by continuing to fund the work of the Urban Forestry Administration to plant trees on public lands.

The polluted waterways, aging sewer system, and notoriously poor air quality undermine DC’s efforts to attract residents from “greener” cities like New York, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. Scientists have proven that trees cool and beautify cities, curb climate changes and make urban places livable. In short, trees are the best practice for remediating our urban environmental challenges.

Please help the city restore our tree canopy by continuing to fund the Urban Forestry Administration at the same funding level appropriated in FY2015.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact me. I may be reached at mhughes@caseytrees.org or 202.349.1893.

Sincerely,

Maisie Hughes
Director of Design + Advocacy