

August 28, 2021

MEMO

To: Tree Advisory Commission

From: Jack Hale

Re: recent opportunities

### Congressman Larson

I recently had two conversations with Congressman John Larson and his assistant, Conor Quinn regarding trees. My main message was that trees should be treated as critical infrastructure. Larson is very interested in the condition of our trees and in undertaking work to preserve and enhance our urban and community forests. He is thinking about trying to create a “Tree Caucus” among his fellow congressional representatives. He asked me what might be useful research priorities that might receive relatively modest federal funding and that would help us in our work. I told him I would discuss this with those more in touch with current and future research priorities and that I would get back to him.

Larson also asked me to review and respond to two pieces of legislation currently under consideration. The first is the SHADE Act, which, as currently conceived, would allocate \$50 million per year for 10 years to support forestry functions specifically in formerly redlined neighborhoods and other “overburdened” areas. Once I read the act, I indicated it was on target with what we are trying to do in Hartford, but that it might need a higher level of funding to be effective nationwide. You can review it at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4166?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22SHADE+Act%22%7D>.

The second piece is the Trillion Trees Act, which would spell out U.S. support for the worldwide goal of planting a trillion trees to combat climate change. It is particularly focused on various methods of sequestering carbon and research to evaluate those methods. It seems to be quite comprehensive, and most of it could be quite useful. This bill, for better or worse, was introduced by a Republican congressman, so many Democrats are refusing to even look at it. Regrettable. You can review the bill at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2639/text?r=6&s=1>.

### Low-cost trees

I received a call from Mike Wrobel of Winterberry Gardens. He said that each year at the end of planting season, he ends up with a wide range of trees that have been in his nursery for at least a year and that need to be planted soon. He can't make money from holding them for another season, and he needs to make room for new stock that will come in the next spring. He said he would be willing to sell them at his cost if we could figure out ways to use them. He also suggested potential for his people to help with delivery and planting at reasonable prices. He recommended that some of us come out to his nursery in Southington to get a clear sense of what he has. He indicated that most would be suitable as street trees, but some are larger and might be planted in open spaces as specimens. I indicated that we would discuss.