



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

Bill Number: Senate Bill 178

Short Title: Program Open Space – Local Projects – Federal Funds

Department's Position: Support

Explanation of Department's Position

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information on SB 178. Senate Bill 178 will update the statutory language related to Program Open Space (POS) Local applications submitted to the Department from county and municipal governments. The bill alters the requirement for applicants to make certain certifications relating to federal funds on applications for POS Local projects.

Senate Bill 178 would eliminate the requirement for local governments to apply for federal grants for every eligible POS Local project submitted if doing so would be overly burdensome or is not possible due to timing, federal grant availability, and/or federal grant requirements. The bill would continue to require the applicant to provide DNR with information on federal funds received for each project. This process ensures that the POS Local grant amount is correct and matching fund requirements are met.

In FY 2022 the POS Local appropriation was \$53.3 million while Maryland's share of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was \$5.6 million. LWCF is a main source of federal grants for park development and acquisition projects. Applications for LWCF funding are limited to a small number of projects since funding requests can only be submitted to the National Park Service up to the amount of federal funds allocated to Maryland. For example, in FY 2022, the Board of Public Works has approved 175 POS Local projects while only 5 applications could be submitted for LWCF funding for local projects.

Senate Bill 178 will not impact local governments ability to apply for federal grants or the Department's administration of POS Local or federal grants but will require information be submitted on federal funds received for projects. It will also reduce the burden on local jurisdictions trying to obtain POS Local funds.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources respectfully requests the Committee to grant SB 178 a favorable report.

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