

Maryland General Assembly  
90 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD  
Subject: Senate Bill 121

Honorable Senate,

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 121. The La Plata community depended on CSM's pool, and we urgently need it reopened. La Plata has been rapidly over-developed residentially, and yet thousands more housing units are being constructed within two miles of CSM's La Plata pool - which sits empty.

Citizens of every age have been negatively impacted by the pool closure. Though Charles county is surrounded by water, babies, children, and adults alike are often unable to get swim lessons due to lack of pool space. We only have three high school pools; none of which are open during the day. So the public does not have daytime access to a pool 9 months of the year.

Our local competitive youth swim team, Southern Maryland Aquatics (SMDA), swam at CSM's La Plata pool nightly. This provided CSM with a reliable (and sizeable) stream of revenue. However, the pool's closure forced SMDA to relocate and turn away many children who would have otherwise been able to join. These limitations have weakened our county's swimmers as a whole. Meanwhile, the counties around us have much larger and stronger swim teams and aquatic programs because they prioritized funding aquatic facilities.

Our senior citizens are arguably the most affected by the closure. Many of them relied on this specific pool for aquatic therapy, as it was open during the day. During a recent Charles County Commissioners meeting, a roomful of senior citizens came to testify that their physical mobility has suffered immensely from no longer having access to daytime hydrotherapy. Prior to the shutdown, these seniors, and many others, came to CSM's La Plata pool routinely for therapy and exercise. One man, a former health teacher at CSM, prided himself on lifelong fitness. He testified that the pool had kept him fit and mobile. However, the pool closure forced him to stop his daily swim exercises, and he has since undergone several joint replacement surgeries - even heart surgery. Nighttime driving is not an option for most seniors, so this daytime pool access was critical to their physical health, rehabilitation, and mental welfare. Our seniors are now in pain, becoming immobile, and suffering unnecessarily.

We are not even asking for a state-of-the-art facility. We are simply asking to renovate an existing pool so we can get our community back in the water as quickly as possible. Charles county's elected officials have prioritized residential and commercial over-development instead of the health and welfare of the community who already resides here. We want and need this pool. Please support our residents of every age by passing this bill to renovate and reopen our pool.

Sincerely,  
Diane Sandoval