



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 14, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 420 - First Reader

SHORT TITLE: State and Local Parks - Play Area Accessibility - Communication Boards

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

The Department of Natural Resources supports this legislation to expand play area accessibility by facilitating the development and deployment of communication boards. As defined in the legislation, these communication boards are intended to enable individuals with limited language skills to express themselves and communicate. It remains a top priority for the Department to continue to find ways to make our resources more accessible and we believe that this legislation will do just that.

The Department does offer one amendment for the Committee's consideration. As drafted, this legislation would require DNR to use Program Open Space funding for the construction of these communication boards. As referenced below the Department officers an amendment to make that an authorization, not a requirement. As drafted, the legislation would preclude the Department from utilizing any other funding source if it is available for the construction of these boards and we would appreciate the flexibility. The proposed amendments also make the same clarification for Program Open Space local as well.

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 3, in line 6, strike "SHALL" and substitute "MAY"; in line 10, strike "SHALL" and substitute "MAY"; and

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Maryland Park Service (MPS) within the Department manages approximately 38 playgrounds around the State. MPS currently has bulletin boards near most playgrounds that already allow for the intended communication required under the bill.

BILL EXPLANATION

This legislation would require the construction of communication boards in each newly constructed play area under State or local jurisdiction. As drafted, the legislation also requires the use of Program Open Space funding for said purpose.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)