



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

April 1, 2025

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 968 – Third Reader

SHORT TITLE: Howard County - Patuxent River Wildland - Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment Ho. Co. 5-25

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports the third reader version of SB 968 because, as amended, it would make the language related to the Patuxent River Wildland consistent with statutory language for other wildlands. It will also provide the Department with the express authority to use mechanized and motorized equipment for specific limited purposes such as maintaining emergency access.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Maryland Wildlands are areas of state-owned land or water that have retained their wilderness character or contain rare or vanishing species of plant or animal life or similar features worthy of preservation. Designated by the Maryland General Assembly, they may include unique ecological, geological, scenic and contemplative recreational areas. State-designated Wildlands are managed for passive recreation only, including hiking, hunting, fishing, bird watching, horseback riding and nature interpretation. The Patuxent River Wildland is a total of 1,579 acres within Patuxent River State Park in Howard and Montgomery Counties.

BILL EXPLANATION

SB 968 as amended authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to use mechanical or motorized equipment for the purpose of retaining, maintaining, removing, or replacing existing trails; and removing, replacing, or disposing of nonnative species within the Patuxent River Wildland.

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