



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 404: Natural Resources - State Parks – Terminology

February 11th, 2026

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and esteemed members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. I come before you to offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 404: Natural Resources - State Parks - Terminology**. This bill simply changes the names of Freedman's State Historical Park and Port of Deposit State Historical Park to Freedman's State Park and Port Deposit State Park, respectively.

For context, the Great Maryland Outdoors Act of 2022 established two new units of the Maryland State Park system by name. The first, Freedman's State Historical Park in northeastern Montgomery County, will be carved from portions of Patuxent River State Park. It encompasses structures and lands associated with Enoch George Howard, a formerly enslaved man who became a prominent leader in Montgomery County's Black community, and his family. The second, Port of Deposit State Historical Park, will encompass the site of the former Tome School in Cecil County, as well as the northern portion of a freedman's community known as Snow Hill.

When the Great Maryland Outdoors Act of 2022 was originally passed, it was not clear to legislators at the time that there is no existing state designation for a "historical park". Maryland State Parks are designed to be multi-purpose sites, with opportunities not just for historical interpretation but for recreation, landscape preservation, environmental education, and more. The Park Service is concerned that giving parks such as Freedman's and Port of Deposit the name "historical park" could limit public interest in the sites.

Furthermore, **House Bill 404** would remove the word "of" from "Port of Deposit" to make the name of the park more geographically accurate by using the current name, rather than one of the historical names of the adjacent municipality.

With that in mind, I humbly request a favorable report on **House Bill 404** to more accurately represent these new State Parks when they open to the public.

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