

SENATE BILL 280

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By: **Senators Augustine and Zucker**

Introduced and read first time: January 20, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – State Parks – Terminology**

3 FOR the purpose of altering certain terminology relating to State parks that preserve and
4 interpret the history of certain populations; and generally relating to State parks.

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

6 Article – Natural Resources

7 Section 5–2A–04(f)(3), 5–2A–05(b)(2), and 5–1012

8 Annotated Code of Maryland

9 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

10 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

11 Article – Natural Resources

12 Section 5–2A–05(b)(7) and (8)

13 Annotated Code of Maryland

14 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Natural Resources**

18 5–2A–04.

19 (f) (3) The Department's decisions related to the establishment of State
20 [historical] parks or other units that preserve and interpret the history of African
21 American, Asian, Indigenous or Native American, and Hispanic or Latino populations in
22 the State shall be made:

23 (i) In coordination with the Commission; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(ii) With input from groups active in the preservation of historical sites of underrepresented communities, including:

2. The Commission on African American History and
6 Culture;

10 5. The Office of Immigrant Affairs.

11 5-2A-05.

16 (7) Details and updates on the creation and implementation of workforce
17 development programs, including:

18 (i) Programs in collaboration with the State's historically Black
19 colleges and universities;

20 (ii) Programs modeled on the National Park Service's diversity
21 strategy under Director's Order #16B; and

22 (iii) Programs focused on creating a pipeline of new rangers and other
23 full-time staff from among volunteers, the State foster youth system, and historically
24 underserved communities; and

25 (8) The results of:

26 (i) Implementing a volunteer management program under §
27 5-2A-02(e) of this subtitle;

(ii) Leveraging charitable funding for park enhancements under § 5-2A-02(f) of this subtitle; and

4 5-1012.

8 (b) The Department may enter into:

13 (c) (1) The Department shall establish the Freedman's State [Historical] Park
14 as a partnership park that seeks to educate the public about and preserve and interpret
15 the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.

18 (d) Freedman's State [Historical] Park shall consist of properties in northeastern
19 Montgomery County in or near the communities of Brookeville, Olney, Sandy Spring, Zion,
20 and Laytonsville that are:

21 (1) Owned by the State and designated by the Department as part of the
22 park; and

23 (2) (i) Owned by a local government, a bicounty agency, or a nonprofit
24 organization; and

25 (ii) Designated as part of the park by a partnership agreement
26 between the owner of the property and the State.

27 (e) (1) The Department shall establish a stakeholder advisory committee to
28 advise the Department on the scope and management of Freedman's State [Historical]
29 Park.

32 (i) A representative of Montgomery Parks, designated by
33 Montgomery Parks' Director of Parks;

(ii) A representative of the Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County, designated by the Alliance's Executive Director;

5 (iv) A representative of the Sandy Spring Museum, designated by the
6 Museum's President; and

7 (v) Any other members as determined by the Department.

10 (f) On or before January 1, 2023, the Department shall submit a report to the
11 General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on:

12 (1) Property owned by the State in northeastern Montgomery County that
13 is suitable for inclusion in Freedman's State [Historical] Park;

18 (3) The funding needed to establish and promote Freedman's State
19 [Historical] Park

20 (f-1) (1) The Department and Baltimore City shall:

21 (i) Convene focus group meetings on the establishment of the
22 Gwynns Falls State Park with community members and stakeholders that reside or operate
23 in the vicinity of the proposed State park:

24 (ii) Develop a list of priority needs and associated cost assessments
25 for park operations and improvements, including:

26 1. Capital improvements:

27 Critical maintenance:

30 4 Historic site restoration:

5. Enhanced outdoor recreation amenities, including trail
improvements;

5 7. Law enforcement and public safety; and

6 (iii) Establish a stakeholder advisory committee to advise the
7 Department and Baltimore City on the scope and management of Gwynns Falls State Park
8 that consists of:

17 (2) On or before December 1, 2025, the Department shall submit a report
18 to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on:

19 (i) Property owned by the State in Baltimore City that is suitable
20 for inclusion in Gwynns Falls State Park;

24 (iii) The funding needed to establish and promote Gwynns Falls State
25 Park.

26 (g) (1) (i) The Department shall establish the Port [of] Deposit State
27 [Historical] Park as a partnership park that seeks to educate the public about and preserve
28 and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the
29 abolition of slavery.

30 (ii) Port [of] Deposit State [Historical] Park shall be held by the
31 State as a State park under the protection and administration of the Department.

32 (2) Port [of] Deposit State [Historical] Park shall consist of a portion of the
33 Bainbridge Naval Training Center site, measuring not less than 120 acres and not more

1 than 150 acres, that the Bainbridge Development Corporation transfers to the Department,
2 including:

- 3 (i) The historic Tome School;
- 4 (ii) The Snow Hill archaeological site; and
- 5 (iii) The adjacent wooded conservation area.

6 (3) (i) The Department shall establish a stakeholder advisory
7 committee to advise the Department on the scope and management of Port [of] Deposit
8 State [Historical] Park.

9 (ii) The stakeholder advisory committee shall consist of the following
10 members:

11 1. One member designated by the Mayor and Town Council
12 of Port Deposit;

13 2. Two members of the House of Delegates and one member
14 of the Senate of Maryland representing Cecil County, designated by the Cecil County
15 Delegation of the General Assembly;

16 3. The County Executive of Cecil County, or the County
17 Executive's designee;

18 4. The President of the Cecil County Council, or the
19 President's designee;

20 5. The President of the Cecil County branch of the NAACP,
21 or the President's designee;

22 6. The President of the Historical Society of Cecil County, or
23 the President's designee;

24 7. The Director of the Cecil County Department of Parks and
25 Recreation;

26 8. The Chair of the Bainbridge Development Corporation, or
27 the Chair's designee;

28 9. The Chief Archaeologist of the Maryland Department of
29 Transportation, State Highway Administration, or the Chief Archaeologist's designee; and

30 10. The following nonvoting ex officio members:

31 A. The Secretary, or the Secretary's designee;

- B. The Secretary of Commerce, or the Secretary's designee;
- C. The Secretary of the Environment, or the Secretary's
- D. The Secretary of Planning, or the Secretary's designee;
- E. The Director of the Maryland Historical Trust, or the
- F. The President of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage
n't designee;
- G. The Superintendent of Cecil County Public Schools;
- H. The Executive Director of the Cecil County Public Library;
- I. The President of Cecil College.

15 (4) On or before September 1, 2024, the Department shall submit a report
16 to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article on:

17 (i) Property that is suitable for inclusion in Port [of] Deposit State
18 [Historical] Park;

19 (ii) The funding needed to establish and promote Port [of] Deposit
20 State [Historical] Park; and

24 (h) It is the intent of the General Assembly that if the State acquires Carr's Beach
25 for the purpose of making the property a State park, the property shall be a partnership
26 park established and maintained in a manner substantially similar to the requirements
27 established under subsections (b) through (d) of this section.

30 (i) North of Billingsley Road:

- (ii) South of Mattawoman Creek;
- (iii) East of Bensville Road; and
- (iv) West of Maryland Route 5.

12 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
13 October 1, 2026.