

2/19/2020

Erika-Gail M. Lecates  
7534 Gumboro Rd.  
Pittsville, MD 21850  
[ajl4161@gmail.com](mailto:ajl4161@gmail.com)  
443-235-2070

The Honorable Chairman Kumar Barve  
Maryland House of Delegates  
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Representative Barve,

I am writing to you on behalf of my hometown of Pittsville, Maryland. As a town commissioner, I have a passion to see continued growth in our community. We have banded together to host many events in our newly revamped park. New playground equipment, mulching, and replenishment of the grounds has been a passion project for my dad, who was Council President and Mayor and I have since carried an interest in this project since his passing in 2016. In FY 2016, we received a grant for \$108,887 to improve our playground park. We were able to improve most of the playground with new swings, new area for a toddler section with new pathways to aid in wheel chair and flat walking space, but we are not finished. These improvements to the grounds have opened up the park once again to community events. Over half of our municipal budget for these projects have come from grants that have derived programs like the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program.

The purpose of my correspondence is to oppose the alteration of the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program to include making flexible grants to Baltimore County and Howard County. The declaration on HB 203 states municipal corporations that are in Baltimore County and Howard County. According to the Maryland Municipal League, however, there are no municipalities located in these counties and therefore should not be entitled to grant money that is earmarked for other counties and municipalities like ours that depend on the grants to pursue projects. One such project that the Town of Pittsville would like to pursue is the addition of an inclusive wheelchair swing to allow all children the joy of playing on the swings. Without the grant money in place, these projects would not be possible and children with physical handicaps would be negatively affected by the inability to enjoy the park for all its purpose just like those children without physical limitations.

Although I do applaud the initiative of Baltimore and Howard county to pursue rehabilitation of their parks, or the development of new parks and procurement of new lands, we feel that it should not be at the expense of municipalities that depend on these grants for funding. Howard County has traditionally been considered the most prosperous counties in Maryland, while Baltimore County has several businesses to generate income for the county. In comparison, according to the last census data, Wicomico county has ranked near the bottom in income per capita.

Therefore, I am urging the Maryland House of Delegates to object HB 203 on February 21, 2020 and the cross-filed bill SB614 on March 4, 2020. The passing of these bills would greatly hinder the ability of Pittsville and communities like us to improve not only the aesthetics of our parks, but the accessibility of the park as well.

Sincerely,

Erika-Gail M. Lecates