



COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY

Commissioner Leonard John Buckle

Commissioner Anthony Casey

Commissioner John Hurley

February 19, 2020

Chairman Kumar Barve
House Environment and Transportation Committee, Room 251
Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB203 Community Parks and Playgrounds

Dear Chairman Barve,


We are writing this letter to let you know that the Commissioners of the Town of Ridgely oppose HB203 Community Parks and Playgrounds. This has been a municipal-only grant program since 2010 and is funded at only \$2.5 million per year. Allowing Baltimore and Howard Counties to access this small amount of funding could decimate what little parks and recreation monies municipalities currently have available through this over-subscribed grant program. These are two of the wealthiest counties in the State of Maryland. Caroline County is not a wealthy County. In our small town we work hard to provide our residents with nice facilities that they can use without raising our taxes. Our 2019 income tax was 6th highest in the state.

The Town of Ridgely has been fortunate in the past to receive funding from the Community Parks and Playgrounds Grant. In 2007 we received \$15,000 for a walking trail at Martin Sutton Park, in 2010 we received \$75,000 for our train station renovation in our Ridgely Railroad Memorial Park and in 2015 we received \$17,510 to put towards the purchase of playground equipment at Martin Sutton Park. Even with the grant funding, we still had to obtain a loan for the playground equipment. Ridgely is very grateful for the \$107,510 that we have received to date. We apply every year for this highly competitive grant. We have three parks in our small town of a little over 1,600 residents. Because there are not as many parks and playgrounds throughout the Caroline County, many organizations from all over the county come to our small town to utilize our parks including Caroline Youth Soccer Association, Caroline North Little League, American Youth Football and Cheer, Exquisite Basketball, Caroline Tennis Association and Caroline County Board of Education, to name a few.

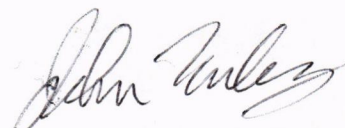
As competitive as this grant is, it is still always nice to see when the smaller towns get funding to do something that is otherwise cost-prohibitive. We always appreciate being considered for our projects. Should this bill pass, smaller towns will see their parks and playground rapidly deteriorate due to lack of funding. The Commissioners of Ridgely are respectfully asking that you oppose HB203 Community Parks and Playgrounds.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

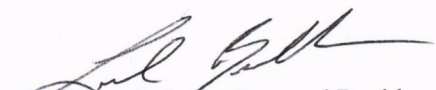
Sincerely,



President, Anthony Casey



Commissioner, John Hurley



Commissioner, Leonard Buckle