



118 NORTH MAIN STREET  
P. O. BOX 471  
FEDERALSBURG, MARYLAND 21632

410-754-8173

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 10, 2020

**RE: SB 337 Splash Pad Operations/Requirements**

Dear Chairman Smith,

Several years ago, the Town of Federalsburg constructed a Splash Pad in one of our parks to provide the public, and specifically children, a safe place to play in water without the inherent danger often present with a swimming pool. The Splash Pad is the modern equivalent of kids "running through the sprinklers" in their front yards in times past, with several additions that offer a safe and inviting place for children to gather and play.

Unfortunately, Maryland Code treats a Splash Pad as if it were a public pool requiring Lifeguards to be posted when it is in operation. Ironically, the whole idea of a Splash Pad was to create an environment that would negate this demand. Splash Pads, which are not part or portion of a traditional pool, present no threat to the user since the water does not pool or collect in an area that is accessible to those using the Splash Pad.

Treating a sprinkler as if it were a pool by requiring a Lifeguard is completely unnecessary and cost prohibitive for smaller jurisdictions. Most splash pads would soon be padlocked if the Lifeguard requirement is not removed from the Code. By way of example, if the Town of Federalsburg was required to hire a lifeguard at \$18.00 per hour and only make our Splash Pad open to the public for 6-hours per day during 90-days of summer, the salary alone would be \$9,720. For smaller jurisdictions who already have limited recreational funding, this is a deal breaker.

Further, the costs of operating a splash pad under the current pool regulations cost Federalsburg an additional \$7,000.00 in salary for the required chemical readings (several per day/after regular hours/weekends). This amounts to overkill for sprinklers and plays a role in a small town deciding whether or not to provide this recreational equipment.

In most town parks across Maryland, children can play unsupervised on swings, monkey bars, climbing walls, and slides. These recreational activities, by law, require no attendant and yet are inherently more dangerous activities than running through a sprinkler. Gravity is a great teacher of common sense when it comes to children.

We ask for your support of SB-337 to ensure that splash pads remain a viable option for municipalities to provide safe summertime relief from the heat for children who just want to play.

With Warmest Regards,

Kimberly Abner, Mayor