



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 458 – Program Open Space – Local Projects – Visitor Behavior Policies

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information on House Bill 458. This bill would require local governments to certify on each Program Open Space (POS) Local project application submitted to DNR that the local government has adopted and submitted a policy of best practices of ethical behavior for visitors to parks and natural areas. In addition, the bill states that the information may be submitted as part of the Local Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plans (LPPRPs) that are submitted at least every five years.

POS Local is a reimbursable grant program administered by DNR and allocated to every county and Baltimore City on an annual basis for local park acquisition and development projects. Projects funded through POS Local are determined by the local jurisdictions that submit applications for funding to the department for review and then submitted to the Board of Public Works for approval. Management of local parks is the responsibility of the local government. Local governments report they have local rules and ordinances in place to address best practices for visitor behavior.

HB 458 will add additional burdensome and unnecessary requirements for local governments to be eligible for POS Local, which is administered by the department. The department will need to ensure that local governments have submitted a policy of best practices that includes all required information. It will also require DNR to revise POS Local applications to include a section where the local government can certify that they have adopted and submitted the policy in accordance with HB 458.

Thank you again for allowing the department to provide the above information on HB 458 for the committee's careful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKittrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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