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BILL NO.: Senate Bill 541

TITLE: Natural Resources – Maryland Park Service and State Parks – Alterations (Great Maryland Outdoors Act)

SPONSOR: Senator Elfreth

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 16, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 541 – Natural Resources – Maryland Park Service and State Parks – Alterations (Great Maryland Outdoors Act). This legislation would address infrastructure, capacity, and accessibility needs within the Maryland Park service and State parks.

The ability to enjoy outdoor parks and open space is a fundamental right of every Maryland resident. Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski is committed to expanding equitable access to recreational outdoor spaces as he understands the opportunities, health benefits and sense of community they provide. The County has prioritized obtaining recreational facilities and most recently announced a state-of-the-art Ravens themed facility at Northwest Regional Park. No matter their income or zip code, Maryland residents should all have easy access to clean, safe parks. In order to ensure this, it is important that the State addresses infrastructure and accessibility needs within these parks.

Senate Bill 541 ensures equal access to open spaces by increasing investments to address the needs of Maryland’s parks. This includes plans to survey infrastructure and maintenance needs, and develop capital improvement and long-range strategic goals. The legislation also provides employment opportunities for Marylanders by increasing the number of park employees. SB 541 is essential to improving the lives of all Marylanders by providing accessible parks throughout the State.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 541. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.