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BILL NO.: Senate Bill 522

TITLE: State and Local Parks - Child Safe Zone Program -
Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)

SPONSOR: Senator Hettleman

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 1, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 522– State and Local Parks - Child Safe Zone Program - Establishment (Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act). This legislation provides resources to improve public safety at parks throughout the State.

Local and State parks have received a record amount of visitors over the last two years. In response growing popularity Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski has continued to invest in outdoor spaces so that facilities can meet growing demand while maintaining accessibility for all communities. The increased use of Maryland’s parks and number of new outdoor facilities must be met with additional safety improvements to ensure that all parks are safe for visitors.

Senate Bill 522 establishes the Child Safety Zone program for the safety of children and families using Maryland’s public parks. This program would provide funding for infrastructure improvements such as enhanced lighting, security cameras, trash receptacles and other safety improvements, and for increased safety personnel for State and local parks. As a parent, County Executive Olszewski understands the need to know that children are being offered the safest possible environment to grow and engage in recreational outdoor activities. As more families utilize the myriad parks the State has to offer, it is critical to ensure that these parks meet the standards Maryland’s children deserve.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 522. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.