

Chesapeake Watershed Restoration Professionals

House Bill 727
Natural Resources – Maryland Park Service and State Parks – Alterations
Great Maryland Outdoors Act

Position: FAVORABLE

February 23, 2022

Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation

Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, Appropriations

Chair Barve, Chair McIntosh, and members of the Committees,

On behalf of the Chesapeake Watershed Restoration Professionals (CWRP), we strongly support HB 727 – Great Maryland Outdoors Act. CWRP was founded in November of 2020 and represents Maryland professionals whose daily work improves the health of Maryland’s waters and our prized Chesapeake Bay. First, we would like to commend Senator Elfreth and Delegate Luedtke for their leadership in assembling stakeholders over the last year to undertake the herculean task of identifying the sources of underinvestment in our State Parks but also presenting a vision for what the future of Maryland state parks. The final product as laid out in SB 541 will bring Maryland’s State Parks into the 21st century by clearing the critical maintenance backlog, making capital improvements, and requiring all Park Service projects to contribute to the improvement of local water quality.

CWRP would like to raise awareness of two key provisions that underscore our support for the legislation.

First, the bill establishes the Park System Capital Improvements and Acquisition Fund with a one-time \$70 million appropriation. \$5 million of the appropriation is directed to infrastructure projects that mitigate the impact of climate change including areas like stormwater infrastructure. Our members specialize in this work, and we believe this is a critical investment that we can fulfill and support its inclusion in HB 727.

Second, HB 727 requires the recognition of the role forests, trees, and wetlands play in tackling climate change and further requires all Park Service projects to contribute to the improvement of local water quality. CWRP believes this underlying theme sends an important message in recognizing the role our streams play in protecting and improving not only local water quality, but the Chesapeake Bay.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony and we urge a favorable report on HB 727.

Sincerely,

Liam O’Meara
President
Chesapeake Watershed Restoration Professionals