



February 21, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
The Honorable Dana M. Stein, Vice-Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

I am writing to express strong and enthusiastic support for HB 882, proposed legislation to build a wildlands trail through the Pocomoke State Forest connecting to the Town of Snow Hill.

I co-chair the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition which seeks to improve and expand safety and resources for those who walk and bike here for recreation, for transportation, and to enjoy nature and good health. The proposed project achieves all these goals. Providing access to the wildlands of Pocomoke River will be good for people and good for the environment by raising awareness of and appreciation for this important natural and cultural area. Connecting this natural area with the town of Snow Hill will also be mutually beneficial for the town and the wildlands.

The coalition and partners in the Towns of Pocomoke City, Snow Hill, Berlin, and Ocean City are very excited about this project as it will be the middle and connecting core of Worcester County bike and hike trail that would have so much positive economic and community impact for towns in our county that often get less attention, and attract active recreation tourists, businesses, and events that would benefit our whole county and region. The Town of Snow Hill is developing a bikeways plan with the assistance of Toole Design, through a grant from MDOT. Their draft bikeway map includes a connection to the proposed trail head for the Wildland trail.

This trail in the center of the county will provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike and provide a core connection that we can build on going South to Pocomoke City (and to the Virginia Rail Trail!) and North to Berlin. It will encourage campers and visitors to the State Park to visit Snow Hill and attract those who are in Snow Hill to the Park. Pocomoke State Forest and the Chad Landing areas are already known for some of the best mountain bike trails on the Eastern Shore. The wildland trail offers access and enjoyment to a whole new group of visitors, as well as for those who live in Worcester County.

On behalf of the Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition, I request that your committee vote in favor of HB 882 to move this project forward. It will greatly benefit our county, the region improving transportation, economic development, and the natural environment.

Sincerely,

Patti Stevens

Patti Stevens, Chair
Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition