



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 23, 2022

Committee: House Environment & Transportation

Bill: _____ HB 727 – Natural Resources – Maryland Park Service and State Parks – Alterations (Great Maryland Outdoors Act)

Position: Support with Amendment

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 727 with amendment.

This bill would in part change how Maryland Park Service (MPS) is funded in a way that significantly impacts municipal Program Open Space funding. Specifically, this bill creates a Park System Capital Improvements and Acquisition Fund and authorizes \$60 million to be transferred from Program Open Space (POS) to that Fund. It also repeals transfer tax appropriations of \$90 million into POS, resulting in a loss of \$23.8 million to local governments from FY 2033 – FY 2031.

MML appreciates the goal of this bill to support capital improvements on park lands and assist land acquisition for new parks. However, local governments rely heavily on Program Open Space for our own recreation and open space development. POS is already in high demand, with all 157 municipalities and 24 counties eligible to apply for \$77 million in FY 2022. Many applicants are denied or do not receive the full funding they requested. Current POS funding is already stretched thin; we cannot afford depletion.

We understand that the Governor's proposed fiscal 2023 budget provides for \$30 million to be paid directly into the Dedicated Purpose Account designated for POS. But that budget isn't final, and POS still loses significant funding under this draft.

MML requests amendments that restructure the funding sources so that POS is untouched. With these amendments, the League would respectfully request a favorable report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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