



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 1057 - Prince George's County - Recreation Authority - Authorization PG 406-22

SPONSOR: Prince George's County Delegation

HEARING DATE: March 8, 2022

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 1057 - Prince George's County - Recreation Authority - Authorization PG 406-22**, which authorizes Prince George's County to establish a recreation authority to oversee youth sports and recreation functions in the county. The bill also establishes the Prince George's County Recreation Authority Blue Ribbon Workgroup to conduct a study and provide recommendations on the establishment of a county recreation authority.

The Prince George's County Recreation Department was brought within the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1970 and Prince George's County is the only jurisdiction in the state that is organized this way.

Now, we want more local control over our Recreation Department and how services are delivered. The new Recreation Authority would exist under State and County law and will have an executive director who answers to a board of County residents. Under this bill, the Executive Director and the Board would be nominated by the County Executive and approved by the County Council.

This legislation would create an authority that is similar to a structure that has served the county well, containing both accountability and efficiency in operations. Our Revenue Authority and our Redevelopment Authority prove that this is an excellent, effective, and efficient model for the provision of service to County residents. We want to put our recreation resources on the same footing and establish a Recreation Authority that would be quasi-private, but still have a great deal of local control and accountability to residents.

Moreover, we have reason to believe that our youth sports opportunities, art, and recreational services can be delivered with greater efficiency. We believe that separating recreation services from park and planning is going to be the best way to create the efficient, effective service delivery our residents deserve.

Beyond sports, our new Recreation Authority will also handle arts, senior activities, and any other recreation services. With this new Recreation Authority, we can offer an increased array of services to County residents and respond quickly by providing new and different services that County residents want while enhancing coordination with existing service providers who already operate in the county.

It is also very clear that now is the time to complete this change. Our current system is not working as well as it should, particularly on youth sports outreach and support. With this new entity, we can quickly reinvent how we approach these offerings, helping to foster greater involvement in youth sports and other community-based activities across Prince George's County.

The legislation will also create a workgroup, that will work over the summer to make recommendations on how the authority will operate and be funded. Those recommendations will be due back to our House Delegation for final implementation by December 1, 2022, meaning you will approve of the changes that the workgroup proposes.

We will create a workgroup and give it time to deliberate on the correct orientation of the authority and those services that will remain in park and planning because we want this change to be well planned, well-coordinated and enhance service delivery.

In addition, while we're hoping to make changes to recreation, this will not impact our dedicated recreation employees or retirees. No recreation employee will lose their job, their healthcare, or their pension because of this legislation. The changes we're exploring have more to do with the structure of the entity that administers recreation services and will not, in any way, negatively impact employees.

This legislation is about ensuring that our great employees can deliver the best services in the best way for our residents. Prince Georgians deserve access to all of the wonderful recreation opportunities our County has to offer, and they deserve a greater voice in choosing what new activities we bring to life.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 1057** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.