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MAYOR

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**HB 1332**

March 9, 2022

**TO:** Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations

**RE:** House Bill 1332 – State and Local Parks - Playground Accessibility -  
Communication Boards

**POSITION: OPPOSE**

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **opposes** House Bill (HB) 1332.

HB 1332 would require the Department of Natural Resources and local governing bodies to construct a communication board in each public playground by October 1, 2027. It defines a "communication board" as a device that displays photos, symbols, or illustrations to enable individuals with limited language skills to express themselves and communicate. The bill also provides for the funding of communication board construction.

Baltimore City Recreation & Parks agrees that the inclusion of a communication board can be a valuable addition to the community and retrofitting our existing playgrounds would be costly. However, the requirement to use Program Open Space funding is an issue. POS funding is critical for us to access capital projects, staffing, and various City Park needs including maintenance. We are opposed to any legislated mandates that direct how we would access those funds.

In addition, BCRP has developed sign standards that include design and placement guidelines for a wide variety of sign types including those for rules, messaging, and communication. The agency is already systematically installing signage in the larger regional parks and including signage when site improvements are made.

For the above-stated reasons, we respectfully request an **unfavorable** report on HB 1332.