



February 23, 2022

House Bill 727

**Natural Resources - Maryland Park Service and
State Parks - Alterations
(Great Maryland Outdoors Act)**

Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

House Bill 727 will make critical, forward-thinking investments in the state park system in order to increase staffing, expand recreational amenities, and improve equity of access.

Anne Arundel County shares the legislature's commitment to preserving our natural resources and supporting and enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities. This commitment has taken on new importance during the pandemic, as public use of and demand for parks and open space has increased dramatically. Our state and local parks have seen a surge of unprecedented crowds throughout the pandemic, which has put stress on park rangers and staff, historical sites, and aging infrastructure. This demand has also highlighted the need to resolve long-standing barriers to park access that some of our communities face.

With nearly 50 active capital projects in its six year plan, the County Department of Recreation and Parks continues to create public spaces that enhance our health and connect us to nature. We are creating better park access for people with disabilities, transforming the idea of a county-wide trail network from a concept to reality, and investing in water access projects. Our goal is to provide a diverse range of accessible recreational facilities and programs to serve the needs of all County residents.

This landmark legislation will preserve the irreplaceable natural, historical, and cultural sites that we all treasure. For these reasons, Anne Arundel County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 727.