



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**February 23, 2022**

**HB 727**

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

**Environment & Transportation Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public-policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

House Bill 727 addresses infrastructure, capacity, and accessibility needs within the Maryland Park Service and State parks, including establishing systems and processes for surveying infrastructure and critical maintenance needs, increasing the number of Maryland Park Service full-time employees, requiring the Department of Budget and Management to conduct certain staff reviews, and requiring the Department of Natural Resources to develop a certain capital improvement plan and a comprehensive long-range strategic plan

At its core, environmental concerns are about the future of God's creation and the one human family. Such concerns are about protecting both the human environment and the natural environment. They are about stewardship of God's creation and our responsibility to those who come after us. As stewards of God's creation we can live more simply, using the earth's resources wisely, reducing our consumption, working to eliminate pollution and reducing our carbon footprint. Our church teachings regarding environmental stewardship are rich and challenging. Pope Benedict XVI, in his 2010 World Day of Peace message entitled if you want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation, urged us to renew and strengthen *“that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying”* (no. 1).

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a favorable report for House Bill 727.