

March 4, 2022

Dear Delegate Kumar P. Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing today in opposition to HB 1057 (PG 406-22), Prince George's County-Recreation Authority-Authorization. This is a late-filed bill that will establish the Prince George's County Recreation Authority and a Blue Ribbon Workgroup to make legal, policy, and fiscal recommendations on how to effectuate a transfer of existing recreation programs and personnel to the County.

It is my fear that this bill is intended to dismantle the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation by moving the Sports, Arts, Youth, Teens, and Seniors programs and its employees to the County. There are many parts of M-NCPPC's work in our county, but I am most familiar with the PG Parks History division. The work of this division to expand the narratives included in the understanding of the history of Prince George's County has been intensely impactful over the years. The work of the museums in this division is held up as an example nationwide for how to work towards inclusive community engagement that strengthens communities. It is my concern that the impact of this bill could result in dismantling this important, necessary work for our community. I am very concerned that the bill seems to presume an outcome even before the first data point is considered.

I humbly request that you vote NO to HB1057. In lieu of creating a Recreation Authority, direct the County to collaborate with the M-NCPPC, do a full assessment of recreation services and programs and develop a strategic plan to address the current and changing needs of the citizens. Moving forward, community engagement at all levels of the process should be fundamental and a broader understanding of the full scope of M-NCPPC's work and the impact this change could have should be better understood.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission opposes the current iteration of this bill. Please refer to Chairman Elizabeth Hewlett's letter and the Commission's Position Statement for more information regarding the Commission's opposition to HB 1057. Your support and involvement in the Parks and Recreation system in Prince George's has always made a tremendous difference.

Respectfully,
Lindsey Baker
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