

Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Taylor House Office Building, Room 251  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

March 4, 2022

Honorable Dana M. Stein  
Taylor House Office Building, Room 251  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

RE: HB 1057: Recreation Authority – I Oppose this Legislation.

DEAR COMMITTEE CHAIR BARVE & VICE COMMITTEE CHAIR STEIN,

Please accept the following as my testimony relating to HB 1057: Recreation Authority in Prince Georges County. I oppose the legislation for the following reasons:

1. The Recreation services of the M-NCPPC are world class and operate to the betterment of the residents of Prince Georges County. I have been a County resident for over forty (40) years and both of my children have played sports, attended camps, nature centers, recreation centers and many more special, focused events put on by the Recreation Department. Always great, always safe and always affordable. We have lived in Upper Marlboro, Riverdale, Greenbelt and Bowie - and the quality, the safety, and the excellence has uniformly been great. Both my son and my daughter played several sports each season and have never had a bad experience, and both became fine athletes as teenagers.
2. It will be wasteful and challenging to create a new authority for recreation in the county because no organization can do it better than the Nation's best. Gold Medal awards, national and international recognition of excellence, M-NCPPC is the benchmark for Park and Recreation agencies all over the nation.
3. The priorities and work program of the Recreation Department are established and monitored by the County Council and the County Executive already. They make the budgets, they decide the work program, they direct the managers where to spend their time and their money. If the Commission managers do not follow the direction of the Executive and Council, they would be breaking the law. IF that were the case, a new agency is not the answer.
4. The M-NCPPC is such a unique agency, and breaking off parts of it, or even dissolving it have been studied by both Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties many, many times. Each and every time the answer is the same - no other agency can do it better, do it more efficiently. We learned that the cost, effort and damage of changing a good thing are overwhelming.
5. A new, additional "authority" will need to duplicate services already provided to the Recreation Department at greater expense. Hiring, training, salaries and benefits, certifying, background checks on coaches, purchasing, office space, administrative support, phones, computers, IT help, risk management, legal advice, supervision, accounting and auditing processes, banking – these are things that the Commission already provides to the Recreation Department, but that the new "authority" will need to pay for. This will be an exorbitant duplication of services with no direct benefit to the young athletes.

6. I have served as Director of Recreation and Parks for the City Of Annapolis, I have served as Division Chief in Anne Arundel Recreation and Parks and I have been the Acting City Manager of the City of Annapolis. I have also served as Regional Division Chief in Montgomery County (M-NCPPC). I have significant knowledge and expertise in these matters, and I am testifying that the Prince Georges part of the Commission is a standard for excellence for every agency in Maryland and the Nation. We all look up to them, and seek their expertise when we need such. It would be such a waste for us residents of Prince Georges County to lose one of the most excellent service providers in the nation.

Please do not waste my tax money on this effort. IF you want to change how the department operates, the County already has the authority to do that, we do not need another, less efficient, less effective agency.

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