

Senator William C. Smith Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: SB – 673 – Natural Resources Police Force – Employees – Authority of Secretary
SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Smith and distinguished members of the Committee:

I am Murray Hunt, a Sergeant with the Maryland Natural Resources Police, and President of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge (FOP) 130. FOP 130 is requesting a favorable vote on Senate Bill 673.

In 2018, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 130, and three other FOP lodges that support the employees of the Natural Resources Police, and the Black Officers Association began talks regarding issues we had with the current Maryland Natural Resources Police promotional process. We worked hard to guide the State Law Enforcement Officers Labor Alliance, which is our exclusive bargaining unit, to create a fair, impartial, unbiased, and transparent promotional process that could be negotiated with the Natural Resources Police Management. Sadly, this negotiation process took almost 3 years to be finalized. The current process still needs a lot of work, however, under the current constraints of negotiating with the Maryland Department of Budget and Management, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Human Resources, and the Maryland Natural Resources Police management this can not be accomplished.

A fair and impartial promotional process for all members of the Maryland Natural Resources Police including protected classes of the Maryland Natural Resources Police is a top priority for FOP 130 and its members. This includes African Americans, American Indians/Native Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Asians, those of two or more races, those of various familial statuses, religions, gender, gender identities, and sexual orientations. It was imperative for all of these employee groups that the Maryland Natural Resources Police do not hold one demographic or protected class in favor of any other and that all of the members of each employee group are treated equally and fairly. FOP 130 is the Maryland Natural Resources Police's largest FOP lodge and has a membership in every protected class mentioned above.

Our membership believes a favorable finding on this bill will allow SLEOLA to negotiate directly with the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources to continue to work and create a more fair, transparent, and unbiased, law enforcement-specific promotional process for all of our members using methods found to work across the United States and not bound by Title 7 of the Department of Budget and Management regulations.

Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 130 strongly agrees that the Maryland Natural Resources Police needs to focus on hiring within all of the protected classes and build an agency that reflects the community we serve. We believe Senate Bill 673 will provide the secretary with the ability to make this goal a reality through funding and direct responsibility.

I would like to thank the sponsor of Senate Bill 673, and our Lodge, FOP 130 would like to ask the committee for favorable support on this important legislation.