

**testimony on SB470.pdf**

Uploaded by: Andrea LeWinter

Position: FAV

I write in support of a favorable committee report on SB470. I am a resident of Howard County Maryland and am involved with the Howard County Conservancy and have been so grateful and privileged to see my county benefit from the many easements the Howard County Conservancy manages, and this has made me aware of the great preservation benefits provided by conservation easement management throughout our state. This bill provides a wonderful opportunity to expand and leverage the critical work of land preservation management.

**SB470\_ShoreRivers Testimony\_SUPPORT\_AR.pdf**

Uploaded by: Annie Richards

Position: FAV



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 470 -  
Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the  
Beautiful Act)**

February 27, 2023

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of SB470** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with more than 2,000 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

Maryland's Eastern Shore is defined by its open space and rural character. Preserving these open spaces to protect them from development and impervious infrastructure will be an important step in reducing nutrient pollution in our local waterways and buffering our low-lying communities from rising tides and storm surge resulting from climate change. **The Maryland the Beautiful Act sets state conservation goals to protect 30% of Maryland's land by 2030, and 40% of Maryland's land by 2040. It also creates a \$10M Rapid Response Revolving Loan Fund to help small- and medium-sized land trusts preserve critical lands quickly and allocates more than \$250K in grant funding toward land trusts and community nonprofits for improving the stewardship and health of land.**

As Chester Riverkeeper, I work with counties, towns, and land conservation organizations within my watershed to create and preserve open spaces. Protected lands have the ability to connect more residents with our waterways, as well as provide opportunities for reforestation or increased tree canopy, both of which are valuable green infrastructure practices that improve water quality. **Increased funding for land acquisition and stewardship will help organizations like ShoreRivers and our partners achieve local public access goals, connect residents to nature, and implement conservation and restoration practices that improve water quality on the Eastern Shore.**

Preserving land across the Eastern Shore will increase open space for public access and recreation, which in turn fosters respect and stewardship for natural resources like our waterways. In turn, it also helps to protect woodlands, grasslands, and marsh lands, which filter nutrients, slow runoff, and buffer our communities from the growing impacts of climate change such as storm surges, rising sea levels, and nuisance flooding. For these reasons, we urge the committee **to adopt a favorable report for SB470.**

Sincerely,  
**Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper** on behalf of ShoreRivers

**ShoreRivers**

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher Sassafras Riverkeeper

[shorerivers.org](http://shorerivers.org) | 443.385.0511 | [info@shorerivers.org](mailto:info@shorerivers.org)

# **SB 470 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Est**

Uploaded by: Cait Kerr

Position: FAV

**Wednesday, March 1, 2023**

**TO:** Guy Guzzone, Chair of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee; Brian Feldman, Chair of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee; and Committee Members

**FROM:** Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; and Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation & Climate Policy Analyst

**POSITION:** Support SB 470 - Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 470 offered by Senator Elfreth. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. We are dedicated to a future where people and nature thrive together.

TNC is part of a global effort to preserve the world's remaining wild and near-natural habitats, with the goal of protecting 30 percent of the planet by 2030. SB 470 sets state-wide land conservation goals for Maryland, aiming to protect 30% of lands by 2030 and 40% of lands by 2040. These goals will ensure that open space will be accessible and available for current and future generations of Marylanders.

SB 470 will create funding mechanisms for private land trusts to better compete in real estate markets. TNC uses a similar process as an organization - the Land Protection Fund – to prioritize and fund land acquisitions across our North America program. Creating a Revolving Loan Fund through SB 470 would enable small and medium sized private land trusts, which may not be able to purchase lands without financial assistance, to preserve critical lands quickly in Maryland. Allocating grant funding towards land trusts and community nonprofits will support these organizations in enhancing stewardship opportunities and improving the land health. SB 470 will preserve lands that will benefit people and nature for years to come.

Each year, the United States loses an area the size of Delaware to development and unsustainable use. This land and biodiversity loss can often be irreversible. Here in Maryland, the lands and waters that surround us are precious resources. They are an invaluable part of our heritage, our economy, and our identity. The Appalachians are one of the most resilient, diverse, and productive ecosystems on Earth. TNC has prioritized conservation across this ancient chain of forested mountains, valleys, wetlands and rivers as a global imperative due to the high biological diversity of species, the carbon stored in the forests and the rich history and culture of this landscape, beginning with the original Indigenous stewards. The section of the Appalachians running through West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania are a critical corridor for species migrating in response to climate change. This section, known as the Allegheny Front, is a priority landscape to preserve the rich biodiversity of the larger Appalachian range as climate change drives species to move and adapt. Serving as a habitat bridge between vast conservation lands in the southern and northern Appalachians, the Allegheny Front plays a critical role in keeping this continental ecosystem connected.

Climate change and a wide range of human activities are impacting habitats at an unprecedented and unsustainable rate. The precipitous decline in biodiversity is one of our global greatest challenges; it is jeopardizing food and water supplies and undermining global, social and economic stability. Economists have estimated that nature contributes trillions of dollars to the global economy each year, in the form of ecosystem services such as pollination and water filtration and storage. By passing the Maryland the Beautiful Act, we can take marked steps to reverse biodiversity loss in our state in order to create a future where natural places can support the most vulnerable species and can continue to provide valuable ecosystem services on which state residents depend.

TNC commends Senator Elfreth for advancing legislation aimed at protecting habitats to maintain Maryland's biodiversity and preserving treasured ecosystem services as well as nature's intrinsic cultural and physical values.

**Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 470.**

# **SB0470 Maryland the Beautiful Act FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV





## TESTIMONY FOR SB0470

### Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Elfreth

**Committee:** Budget and Tax

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0470 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Keep Maryland Beautiful Program and Land Conservation Implementation Grant Program will serve to maintain 40% of Maryland's land in its natural state and save the habitats of countless species. This bill will not only preserve our environment, it will also dramatically improve funding available to urban land trusts, and invest in stewardship of lands impacted by climate change and invasive species.

Currently, Maryland has conserved 28.7% of its lands and critical habitats (23% of total land mass) and only annually monitors ~11% of land under easement. Land preservation is critical to the protection of species and the habitats they depend on. The United Nations recently reported that 150 – 170 species permanently go extinct every day. In North America alone, since 1970, bird populations have dropped by more than 30%.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **SB470\_IndivisibleHoCoMD\_FAV\_CrystalKonny.pdf**

Uploaded by: Crystal Konny

Position: FAV



## **SB470 – Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

### **Testimony before Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

**March 1, 2023**

#### **Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Crystal Konny, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in support of SB470 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act). We appreciate the leadership of Senator Elfreth for sponsoring this important legislation.

The bill establishes the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program to provide loans to land trusts to purchase land for conservation purposes, establishes a Land Trust Revolving Loan Fund, contributes money to the Maryland Environmental Trust to be used to provide grants through the Keep Maryland Beautiful Program, and establishes the 40 x 40 Land Conservation Implementation Grant Program to support implementation of land conservation goals.

Land conservation is a very simple defense to the challenge of climate change and sea-level rise as it offers carbon sequestration and lessens flooding impacts. It preserves essential habitat for native plants and animals which helps ensure biodiversity and mitigate the unprecedented species loss we've been seeing in the past several years. One million species are at risk of extinction worldwide. In the last 40 years, wildlife populations have declined by 60 percent. Land conservation will help stop species loss.

Natural areas and parks are indispensable to people's physical and mental health and enjoyment. This bill will provide space for people and wildlife to thrive. In the last half of the century, Maryland lost an estimated 7,200 acres of forest land per year. Let's set a goal to reverse that.

We urge you to pass the Maryland the Beautiful Act. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.**

Crystal Konny  
Columbia, MD 21044

**BaltimoreCounty\_FAV\_SB0470.pdf**

Uploaded by: D'Andrea Walker

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*

JENNIFER AIOSA  
*Director of Government Affairs*

AMANDA KONTZ CARR  
*Legislative Officer*

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG  
*Associate Director of Government Affairs*

**BILL NO.:**            **SB 470**

**TITLE:**                **Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

**SPONSOR:**           **Senator Elfreth**

**COMMITTEE:**       **Budget and Taxation**

**POSITION:**         **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**                **March 1, 2023**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 470 – Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act). This legislation would establish the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program to provide loans to land trusts to purchase land for conservation purposes.

Baltimore County is committed to local land conservation efforts, and recognizes that conserving nature and its resources is a shared effort amongst all communities. As communities around the globe are already beginning to suffer the detrimental effects of climate change on local ecosystems, it has become clear that significant investment and effort is required to ensure we continue to enjoy all that nature has to offer. Access to open and green spaces serves a critical function for residents as well. It offers improved quality of life, health outcomes, and recreational spaces for children and families to play outdoors. It is for this reason that Baltimore County has aggressively pursued the acquisition of land with Program Open Space funding.

Senate Bill 470 would establish the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program. This would fund dedicated partners who work with state and local governments to improve access to nature, incentivize conservation, stabilizing local ecosystems, and sequester carbon emissions. This bill would provide urgent funding to empower partners throughout the state to take action on one of the most important public health crises of our time.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 470. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).

# **Nature Forward -SB470 - FAV .pdf**

Uploaded by: Denisse Guitarra

Position: FAV

February 28, 2023

**Written testimony for SB470 - Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs - (Maryland the Beautiful Act)<sup>1</sup>**

**Position: Favorable**



Submitted by: Denisse Guitarra, MD Conservation Advocate, Nature Forward

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Dear Members of the Budget & Taxation and Education, Energy & Environment committees,

Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society) is the oldest independent environmental organization in the DC metropolitan region. For 126 years, Nature Forward has inspired residents of the greater Washington, DC, area to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through environmental education, advocacy, and outdoor experiences. We strongly support passage of SB470, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify on this bill.

If enacted, SB470 will have a threefold impact by 1) setting a new state conservation of protecting 30% of Maryland's lands by 2030 and 40% by 2040; 2) Create a \$10M Rapid response revolving loan fund to help small and medium land trusts to preserve lands quickly; 3) Allocate more than \$250K in grant funding towards land trusts and community non-profits. SB470 is a strong well-rounded legislation that will facilitate more land conservation and stewardship, provide funding to land trusts for such activities, and increase nature access, protect biodiversity and habitat, and help combat the climate crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> SB470. Available at: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0470>



## **New 30 x 30 and 40 x 40 State Land Conservation Goals**

SB470 states “the intent of the General Assembly” that “by 2030, 30% of lands in the state be conserved, and by 2040, 40% of lands in the state be conserved.” This bill’s “30 x 30” land conservation goals mirrors those in President Biden’s 2021 Executive Order 14008.<sup>2</sup> Notably, SB470 goes further by including an additional goal of protecting 40% of Maryland lands by 2040. To help meet these challenging conservation goals, the bill provides for a Smart Growth Subcabinet to work with state and local partners to track progress and implementation. Also impressive is the broad array of activities that will be undertaken to accomplish these land conservation goals. Additionally, the Maryland Environmental Trust will administer a “40 x 40 land conservation implementation grant program;” the program grant will be competitively awarded each year to a statewide nonprofit organization focusing on supporting “permanent conservation of the lands of the state.” For FY 2025 and thereafter, the bill also mandates an annual budget appropriation of \$250,000 for this effort.

## **Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program and Revolving Loan Fund**

We fully support SB470 is the creation of a revolving loan program to make loans to certain land trusts on a rolling basis, to assist them in purchasing property for purposes of conservation. The loan program is specifically intended to support the efforts of local trusts that have trouble accessing these programs to partner up with a local government entity. A special, non-lapsing revolving loan fund, administered by the Maryland Environmental Trust, is also created to provide revolving loans to land trusts on a rolling basis to assist the trusts purchase property. A land trust that receives a program loan to purchase property must repay the loan only after the property is placed under an easement or transferred to a state or local

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<sup>2</sup> Executive Order 14008, “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad” (Jan. 27, 2021), Sec. 216. 86 Fed. Reg. 7619, 7627 (Feb. 1, 2021). Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>





government entity. Notably, the bill directs that in FY 2025, the governor includes in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$10 M to the Fund, to be used solely for the loan program.

### **Grants to Land Trusts & Community Non-Profits**

Nature Forward also supports the provisions in SB470 for land stewardship grants. In FY 2025 and thereafter, the governor shall include an annual budget appropriation of \$235,000 to the Maryland Environmental Trust for several types of grants. This includes grants to land trusts to support land monitoring and stewardship of agricultural lands, forests lands, and lands facing a threat from invasive species or climate change. Citizen stewardship grants to nonprofits, community organizations, schools, and municipal corporations also are included.

SB470 merits support because it establishes valuable land conservation goals and programs for Maryland as well as the mechanisms and the money to achieve these goals by creating partnerships between government and local communities. The permanent protection of Maryland lands from development is a laudable goal and one which can help combat climate change. On behalf of Nature Forward and our 28,000 members and supporters, we recommend that the Committee passes and approves SB470. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Denisse Guitarra, MD Conservation Advocate, Nature Forward

Anne W. Cottingham, Conservation Volunteer, Nature Forward

**SB0470-BT\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FAV



## **Senate Bill 470**

*Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs  
(Maryland the Beautiful Act)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation and Education,  
Energy, and the Environment Committees

Date: March 1, 2023

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 470. The bill seeks to establish sustainable long-term programs to accelerate and improve park land acquisition and encourage the development of community green spaces.

The State of Maryland and its counties have been immensely successful at expanding parks lands and developing those spaces into world-class recreation venues. Maryland's prioritization of public recreational spaces has advanced numerous health and economic benefits, a central element in Maryland's "quality of life" proposition.

The proposed Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program (LLTRLP) will provide local governments with new resources to make their communities more sustainable, livable, and healthy. The LLTRLP is designed to provide low-interest financing to local land trusts that are working with county governments to acquire new green space. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, both state and local greenspaces were filled, often to capacity, as residents sought some form of healthy and safe recreation - it has become abundantly clear that these spaces offer immense value to neighborhoods across the state.

The precise means to launch such a revolving loan program, and the sources for its "seed funding" are a matter of broader public policy, where counties defer to the Committee's wisdom. But the goals of SB 470, to create a sustainable program to advance these goals, is meritorious.

The pandemic has highlighted how critical these spaces can be to a healthy and vibrant community. SB 470 would provide county governments and partners with additional resources to expand park sizes and greenspaces. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give SB 470 a **FAVORABLE** report.

# **Arundel Rivers Testimony FAV for SB470.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elle Bassett

Position: FAV



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**Testimony encouraging a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 470 – Natural Resources – Land Conservation – Establishment of Goals and Programs**

**Maryland the Beautiful Act**

Budget and Taxation Committee  
March 1, 2023

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB470**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

**Preserving natural lands is one of the best tools we have in protecting our local water quality.** According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the conservation of natural lands maintains the water cycle, minimizes pollutant runoff, and prevents the loss of natural lands to more environmentally damaging development or land use practices.<sup>1</sup> Maryland the Beautiful Act, also known as the 40x40 Act, would mandate a conservation goal of 40% of Maryland lands by 2040. Additionally, it will create a \$10 million Rapid Response Revolving Loan Fund to help small and medium sized land trusts preserve critical lands, which will allocate grant funding towards land trusts and community nonprofits. This directly supports our mission of achieving clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways.

We have witnessed multiple instances in Anne Arundel County where local non-profits and land trusts have expressed interest in purchasing largely forested, agricultural, or open space lands for sale. Often, these small organizations have not had the financial support to competitively act, resulting in natural filter lands being lost to development. Anne Arundel County has experienced some of the largest extent of intact forest converted to developed land between 2013-2018, with over 2,500 acres of forest lost.<sup>2</sup> **Our waterways are polluted with excess nutrient and sediment pollution. Making the commitment to preserve 40% of Maryland lands by 2040 and supporting our local land trust to meet this goal will make a direct impact on our home waterways, which ultimately support our economy, ecosystems, and way of life in Maryland.**

Arundel Rivers Federation encourages the conservation of our natural lands to benefit our local habitats and water quality when possible, and respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE REPORT on SB470**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett  
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper  
Arundel Rivers Federation

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<sup>1</sup> EPA. Advancing Watershed Protection Through Land Conservation. 2022. [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-08/Advancing\\_Watershed\\_Protection\\_Through\\_Land\\_Conservation\\_EPA\\_July\\_2022.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-08/Advancing_Watershed_Protection_Through_Land_Conservation_EPA_July_2022.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Technical Study on Changes in Forest Cover and Tree Canopy in Maryland. 2022. <https://agmr.umd.edu/technicalstudy-changes-forest-cover-and-tree-canopy-maryland>.

**SB470AudubonMidAtlantic\_MarylandtheBeautiful.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jim Brown

Position: FAV



**Maryland Office**  
Patterson Park Audubon Ctr  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21214

March 1, 2023

**To:** Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**From:** Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

**Subject:** Favorable Testimony for Maryland **SB470 *Natural Resources -Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)***

Good afternoon. My name is Jim Brown. I am the policy director for Audubon Mid-Atlantic, here in Maryland. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic enthusiastically supports the Maryland the Beautiful Act. Specifically, this bill protects birds and it protects our unique landscapes for future generations of Marylanders to benefit from. This bill is good for birds. It is good for people. And it is good for the dynamic ecosystems that make Maryland a special place.

The science tells us birds are in decline due to habitat loss and habitat fragmentation. 1/3 of eastern forest bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. Grassland and shrubland birds such as eastern towhee and brown thrasher are disappearing even faster. On the Eastern Shore the endangered salt marsh sparrow is losing critical habitat each year. SB470 will slow this habitat loss by ensuring the protection of at least 30% of Maryland's land by 2030.

Iconic birds such as – the Wood Thrush, American Kestrel, Brown Thrasher, Prairie Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark and Baltimore Oriole which are in decline across Maryland will benefit from this bill. But SB470 is not just for the birds. Protected lands in the form of parks and preserves provide people with respite, recreation, and public health benefits. These protected lands also support local economies throughout the state through ecosystem services, hospitality, tourism and associated industries. Protecting more land in Maryland is also an investment in a future defined by climate change. We know that protected forests, grasslands, wetlands, and coastal marshes sequester carbon, slow flooding, filter water, and buffer vulnerable communities from increasing risks of climate change related storm events and sea level rise.

The Science tells us:

- Habitat in Maryland is becoming increasingly fragmented and lost

- Habitat loss and fragmentation leads to lower productivity in bird populations and increases the impacts of climate change
- Protecting and conserving land in Maryland will protect vulnerable bird populations, mitigate the impacts of a changing climate, and make Maryland's landscapes more accessible to people across the state

SB470 will strengthen Maryland's economy, create a more resilient environment, and deliver better public health outcomes to our residents and visitors. It will also continue to hold Maryland up as a leader in habitat conservation, ecosystem preservation, and the protection of birds now and into the future.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Jim Brown

Policy Director  
Audubon Mid-Atlantic  
410-207-2445  
[Jim.brown@audubon.org](mailto:Jim.brown@audubon.org)



# **SB 470 Testimony - IPC w signatories.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jodi Rose

Position: FAV



*Forming Faithful Stewards,  
Caring for Sacred Waters*

PO Box 6791  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Maryland the Beautiful Act  
Senate Bill 470  
FAVORABLE**

February 28, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair, Budget and Taxation  
Maryland Senate  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Jim Rosapepe  
Vice Chair, Budget and Taxation  
Maryland Senate  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

On behalf of Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, I write to urge your support for the Maryland the Beautiful Act (SB 470) to advance this bill favorably from committee.

**We, along with the attached list of 225 people of faith who live or worship in Maryland,** the Earth and the web of life, and strive to be good stewards of the Earth's land and waters. We are grateful for the ways the Maryland Assembly has worked to protect our environment, but more needs to be done to create a healthier Bay for future generations.

Greenspaces benefit humans' physical, mental, and spiritual health. However, not all Marylanders have easy access to greenspaces. Likewise, many greenspaces are and will continue to be subject to threat of development that could diminish biodiversity. At present, Maryland has permanently conserved just under 30% of its total lands and critical habitats (~24% of land and water) and only annually monitors ~11% of land under easement. This bill sets a conservation goal of 40% of Maryland lands permanently protected by 2040, while also developing a plan for implementation, stewardship, and improved the health of the land.

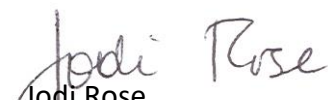
**These measures also strengthen Maryland's strategies for fighting climate change, something we are woefully underprepared for and are called upon to act now for future generations' health and well being.** Preserving land in perpetuity is a key strategy for fighting climate change, because when land is preserved it sinks carbon and creates resilient ecosystems that are otherwise lost if the land is developed. Bolstered funds in the Citizen Stewardship Grant, also included in the Maryland the Beautiful Act, will increase funding to school programs that help develop the next generation of conservation leaders. The Maryland the Beautiful Act is an

investment in our lands and Maryland youth, ensuring that future Marylanders will be able to enjoy the bountiful beauty of Maryland.

Importantly, this bill increases the capacity of small and medium under-resourced land trusts to engage in conservation. The Maryland the Beautiful Act would create a one-time funded \$9.5M Land Trust Rapid Response Revolving Loan Fund Program that will enable land trusts to compete for land acquisition for conservation purposes in an ever-competitive real estate market. **This Fund would tip the scale in David-and-Goliath situations where these land trusts may otherwise be unable to secure and protect land from development.** Uplifting these land trusts rebalances power in the face of climate change and keeps Maryland focused on a future where all people can thrive.

We are all called to continually renew ourselves and improve our behaviors to be more mindful of future generations. This is important legislation that will enhance and protect Maryland's biodiversity, invest in future generations of Marylanders, empower more Maryland land trusts to conserve land, and remind our state leaders for years to come that nothing is more important than preserving greenspace in perpetuity so that all may thrive here. As the Dalai Lama says, "Since climate change and the global economy now affect us all, we have to develop a sense of the oneness of humanity." As people of faith, we hope that you will take this step to conserve Maryland's land and invest in Maryland's youth, for it is one small step in uniting humanity to preserve the dignity and health of us all.

Sincerely,

  
Jodi Rose  
Executive Director

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Denomination, if declared</b>
Albert	Todd	Annapolis	Anne Arundel	MD	Episcopal Church
Nancy	Plaxico	Annapolis	Anne Arundel	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Rita	Ferry	Annapolis	Anne Arundel	MD	Roman Catholic
Amy	Clements	Annapolis	Anne Arundel	MD	
Diane	Rey	Annapolis	Anne Arundel	MD	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Catherine	Stirling	Annapolis	Anne Arundel	MD	
Safiyyaah	Tauheed	Annapolis	Anne Arundel	MD	
Elizabeth	Knupp	Davidsonville	Anne Arundel	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Lauren	Bloom	Edgewater	Anne Arundel	MD	Episcopal Church
Lenny	Rudow	Edgewater	Anne Arundel	MD	
Gloria	Rosencranz	Millersville	Anne Arundel	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Ruth	Stumpfohl	Pasadena	Anne Arundel	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Kraven	Sweitzer	Pasadena	Anne Arundel	MD	
Robert	Royer	Severna Park	Anne Arundel	MD	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Mary	Vogelsang		Anne Arundel	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Raymond	Heil	Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Elizabeth	Miller	Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	
Joy	Brown	Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Marcia	Metzler	Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	
Rose Marie	Hellmann	Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	
Laurence	Fogelson	Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	
Bernadette	Krol	Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	
Kathy	Gross	Catonsville	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Carel	Hedlund	Cockeysville	Baltimore	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Barbara	Miyasaki	Cockeysville	Baltimore	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Susan	Meier	Hunt Valley	Baltimore	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Rita	McMullin	Lutherville	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Dennis	McMullin	Lutherville	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Donna	Eden	Lutherville Timonium	Baltimore	MD	Episcopal Church
Paul	Waldman	Monkton	Baltimore	MD	
Natalie	Johnson	Nottingham	Baltimore	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Cynthia	Taylor	Owings Mills	Baltimore	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Ann	Vinup	Parkville	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Katherine	Martin	Perry Hall	Baltimore	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Cecilia	Rund	Reisterstown	Baltimore	MD	Jewish-Reform
Mary Catherine	Bunting	Ruxton	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Glenn	Wells	Timonium	Baltimore	MD	
Stuart	Stainman	Towson	Baltimore	MD	Jewish-Conservative
Peta	Richkus	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
Patty	Mochel	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
Ann	Snoeyenbos	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
cora	middleton	Towson	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Carlton	Sexton	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
Patricia	Murphy	Towson	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Rita	Bueche	Towson	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Mary Ellen	Pease	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
William	Reamy	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
Kathleen	Brady	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
Roland	Oehme	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
Kirsten	Hoffman	Towson	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Diane	Topper	Towson	Baltimore	MD	
Leo	Fenzel	White Marsh	Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Joseph	Wright		Baltimore	MD	Presbyterian
Eloise	Brown		Baltimore	MD	Roman Catholic
Rev. Albert K., III	Lane	Lusby	Calvert	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Cairn	Krafft	Owings	Calvert	MD	Quaker
Kathryn	Dangin	Owings	Calvert	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Susan	Vilcheck	Owings	Calvert	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Davin	Faris		Carroll	MD	
Linda	Hunt	Elkton	Cecil	MD	Episcopal Church

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Denomination, if declared</b>
Marc And Alice	Imlay		Charles	MD	
Mollie	Rudow	Eldorado	Dorchester	MD	
Leah	Mack	Bridge	Frederick	MD	
Esther	Ziegler	Frederick	Frederick	MD	United Church of Christ
Linda	Coyle	Frederick	Frederick	MD	United Church of Christ
Gerald	Fuss	Frederick	Frederick	MD	United Church of Christ
Shelley	Weakly	Frederick	Frederick	MD	United Church of Christ
Barbara	Schectman	Frederick	Frederick	MD	
Kerri	Hesley	Frederick	Frederick	MD	
Patricia	Bodine	Frederick	Frederick	MD	Roman Catholic
Patricia	Cahaney	Frederick	Frederick	MD	Roman Catholic
Marianne	Dacey	Frederick	Frederick	MD	Roman Catholic
Suzanne	Schmidt	Frederick	Frederick	MD	United Church of Christ
Susan	Johnson	Frederick	Frederick	MD	
Sandra	Smith-Gill	Frederick	Frederick	MD	
mary ann c.	ford	Frederick	Frederick	MD	
Gwen	Austin	Frederick	Frederick	MD	
Kathleen	Rall	Jefferson	Frederick	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Lorraine	Blakeslee	Jefferson	Frederick	MD	
Janet	Fox	Middletown	Frederick	MD	
Clare	Archer	Mount Airy	Frederick	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Michael	Peterson	Myersville	Frederick	MD	Roman Catholic
Victoria	Bolton	Woodsboro	Frederick	MD	Quaker
Daniel	Davis		Frederick	MD	United Church of Christ
Josh	Hastings	Forest Hill	Harford	MD	
kathy	younkin	Columbia	Howard	MD	Roman Catholic
Susannah	Feldman	Columbia	Howard	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Sharon	Unger	Columbia	Howard	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Sheila	Robinson	Columbia	Howard	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Dara	Baker	Columbia	Howard	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
John	Barnes	Elkridge	Howard	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Ron	Gunderson	Ellicott City	Howard	MD	Presbyterian
Bonnie	Sorak	Ellicott City	Howard	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Barbara	Winter Watson	Ellicott City	Howard	MD	Roman Catholic
Ann	Clark-Whitlock	Ellicott City	Howard	MD	Roman Catholic
Margaret	Burrows	Ellicott City	Howard	MD	Episcopal Church
Liz	Feighner	Laurel	Howard	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Wendy	Hall		Howard	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Rebekah	Hock	Chestertown	Kent	MD	
nanci	wilkinson	Bethesda	Montgomery	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Amy	Yount	Bethesda	Montgomery	MD	
Fred Scherlinder	Dobb	Bethesda	Montgomery	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Ronnie	Brown	Burtonsville	Montgomery	MD	
Lee	McNair	Chevy Chase	Montgomery	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Mary	Kolle	Derwood	Montgomery	MD	Episcopal Church
Gail	Landy	Gaithersburg	Montgomery	MD	Jewish-Reform
Janet	King	Gaithersburg	Montgomery	MD	Episcopal Church
Gail	Unterberger	Gaithersburg	Montgomery	MD	Episcopal Church
Laurie-Anne	Sayles	Gaithersburg	Montgomery	MD	Baptist-American
Megan	Didavi	Gaithersburg	Montgomery	MD	Episcopal Church
Mary	Rouse	Gaithersburg	Montgomery	MD	
Ruth Anna	Skowronski	Germantown	Montgomery	MD	Episcopal Church
Laurie	Yelle	Germantown	Montgomery	MD	
Kenzie	Raulin	Kensington	Montgomery	MD	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Carolyn	Knight	Olney	Montgomery	MD	
sylvia	diss	Potomac	Montgomery	MD	Roman Catholic
Alison	Bennett	Potomac	Montgomery	MD	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Linda	Silversmith	Rockville	Montgomery	MD	Other-Not Listed Elsewhere
Jodi	Rose	Rockville	Montgomery	MD	Roman Catholic
Johanna	Wermers	Rockville	Montgomery	MD	

First Name	Last Name	City	County	State	Denomination, if declared
Mark	Wright	Rockville	Montgomery	MD	Episcopal Church
Reba	Carruth	Rockville	Montgomery	MD	Baha'i' Faith
Evelyn	Jacob	Rockville	Montgomery	MD	
Joelle	Novey	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	Jewish-Unaffiliated
Alison	Petersen	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	United Church of Christ
William	Dinges	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	Roman Catholic
Maureen	Malloy	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Rebecca	Rehr	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	Jewish-Reform
Michele	Frome	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	Other-Not Listed Elsewhere
Heidi	Rhodes	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	
Kathryn	Kevany	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	
Cathy	Henderson	Silver Spring	Montgomery	MD	
Kolya	Braun-Greiner	Takoma Park	Montgomery	MD	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Marilyn	Wind		Montgomery	MD	
Paul	Holmes		Montgomery	MD	
ellen	turner		Montgomery	MD	
Michael	Bloom	Berwyn Heights	Prince George's	MD	Jewish-Reform
Monica	Greene	Bowie	Prince George's	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Jesica	Jacobs	Bowie	Prince George's	MD	
Joyce	Dowling	Brandywine	Prince George's	MD	
Kurt	Pluntke	Colmar Manor	Prince George's	MD	Other-Evangelical Protestant (Non-denominational)
Judith	Rubinstein	Greenbelt	Prince George's	MD	Jewish-Conservative
Heidi	Hess-Webber	Laurel	Prince George's	MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Sandra	Miller	Unit X Greenbelt	Prince George's	MD	Other-Not Listed Elsewhere
CAtherine	Tengwall	Grasonville	Queen Anne's	MD	Roman Catholic
Richard	Yobst	Marion Station	Somerset	MD	
Annabel	Leshner	Easton	Talbot	MD	Lutheran-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Debbie	Satorius	Knoxville	Washington	MD	Roman Catholic
Elizabeth	Parker	Delmar	Wicomico	MD	Unitarian Universalist
Farah	Yahya	Salisbury	Wicomico	MD	Islam
Frieda L	Malcolm	Salisbury	Wicomico	MD	Episcopal Church
Ron	Pagano JD	Salisbury	Wicomico	MD	
James	Cockey	Salisbury	Wicomico	MD	Episcopal Church
Cheryl	Lang	Salisbury	Wicomico	MD	
Mary	Harrison	Ocean City	Worcester	MD	
Bethany	Gregg	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Louise	Gregg	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Martha	Ruffin	Baltimore		MD	Episcopal Church
peggy	meyer	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Adrienne	Yoe	Baltimore		MD	
John	Moore	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Jill	Huppert	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
John	Schmidt	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Jan	Danforth	Baltimore		MD	Unitarian Universalist
Therese	Dougherty	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Raymond	Chase	Baltimore		MD	
Sandy Lee	Triolo	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Lynn	Pinder	Baltimore		MD	Baptist-Other
Christina	Pham Linhoff	Baltimore		MD	
Ruwaydah	Amin	Baltimore		MD	
Susan	Woodman	Baltimore		MD	
Peter	Gregg	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Barbara	Bowles	Baltimore		MD	
Angelia	Caro	Baltimore		MD	
Santiago	Duques	Baltimore		MD	
Geraldine	Fialkowski	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Katie	Little	Baltimore		MD	Roman Catholic
Eneshal	Miller	Beltsville		MD	AME (African Methodist Episcopal Church)
Linda	Bergofsky	Laurel		MD	Jewish-Reconstruction
Charlie	Goedeke	Laurel		MD	Quaker

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Denomination, if declared</b>
Ammar	Hanif	Odenton		MD	Islam
Delores	Moore			MD	Roman Catholic
Nancy	Gehman			MD	Mennonite
Lydia	Thomas			MD	Episcopal Church
Danielle	Allen			MD	Episcopal Church
Jessica	Lowry			MD	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Amie	LaPorte			MD	Unitarian Universalist
Lisa	Hayes			MD	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Audrey	Rogers			MD	
John Francis	Rogers			MD	
Linda	Davis				Quaker
Laura	Melamed				
Lani	Hummel				United Methodist Church (UMC)
Debbie	Gousha				
Cynthia	Williams				
Dylan	Laconich				
Sharon	Boies				
Therese	Dougherty				
Rasheedah	Sharif				
Siddeeqah	Fichman				
Faheem	Lea				
Oswaldo	Montoya				
Marzena	Dyba				
Ellen	Mackenzie				
Laurie	wallace-Lanham				Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)
Katherine	Huy				
Nikole	Koterski				
Janet	Scudiero				
Dominic	Scudiero				
Karen	Stern				
Maureen	Taylor				
Laura	Byrne				
Kathleen	Hairfield				
Rosemary	Schappelle			CT	
Margaret	Moos			CT	
Bonnie	Greer	Washington		DC	
Erica	Lloyd	Washington		DC	
Holly Fluty	Dempsey	Bethany Beach	Sussex	DE	Unitarian Universalist
Hurle	Waldman		DeKalb	GA	
Donna	Dannals		Union	NJ	
Theresa	Toole		Kings	NY	
Wendy	Alberg	Ithaca	Tompkins	NY	Unitarian Universalist
Josh	Jacobs-Velde		Atoka	OK	
Rand	Tenor	Mechanicsburg	Cumberland	PA	
Cheryl	Sidwell	Avella	Spartanburg	PA	

# **2023 Written Testimony SB 470 Maryland the Beautif**

Uploaded by: Kenneth Phelps, Jr.

Position: FAV





# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal  
Public Policy  
Network

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0470**  
**The Maryland the Beautiful Act**  
**\*\*FAVORABLE\*\***

**TO: Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Co-Chair, and Al Todd, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland**  
**DATE: March 1, 2023**

The growing awareness of environmental crisis has compelled the Episcopal Church to examine the human relationship with the environment. We believe that it is the role of humanity to preserve the environment. In Genesis, God made the Earth and then created human beings and gave them a role of stewardship in relation to the rest of creation. God commissions us to sustain and protect His creation. In Jesus, God so loved the world. We follow Jesus, so we love the world God loves. We recognize that the love and care we give to the environment that sustains us is a direct reflection of our love and care for each other. Concerned for the global climate emergency the loss of species, and the degradation of air and water, we draw on diverse approaches to protect, restore, and sustain loving, liberating, life-giving relationships with all of Creation. It is indeed our moral obligation.

The Episcopal Church and the Maryland Diocese have embraced this moral obligation of creation care and have established programs to support our congregations in this work. This Bill provides a holistic approach to conservation of nature by setting aside and protecting healthy ecosystems that produce clean air and water, important habitats, and enrichment of our lives. The Maryland the Beautiful Act does not mitigate damage but rather sets aside from damage a portion of the land and waters that improve our health and quality of life and can sustain us in the future.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable outcome for this bill.

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TEL: 410-467-1399 / 800-443-1399 FAX: 410-554-6387  
[WWW.EPISCOPALMARYLAND.ORG](http://WWW.EPISCOPALMARYLAND.ORG)

# **SB470\_GreenTowsonAlliance\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kirsten Hoffman

Position: FAV



February 20, 2023

**SB470 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs  
(Maryland the Beautiful Act)  
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapeppe and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

The Green Towson Alliance writes in support of SB470, Maryland the Beautiful Act which sets new state conservation goals of 30% of Maryland lands permanently protected by 2030 and 40% of land by 2040. This goal aligns with and exceeds the nationwide land and water conservation goals of President Biden's Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful Report. The Green Towson Alliance advocates for a greener, healthier, more beautiful community at the local level monitoring development proposals and restoring habitat, among other work. We believe that development must be balanced with smart and strategic land conservation. We see pockets of green disappearing that could otherwise connect wildlife corridors, stabilize temperatures in urban heat islands, provide recreation and open space, and absorb stormwater - all problems our neighborhoods in Towson are increasingly experiencing.

This bill equips local land trusts to act quickly and balance development pressure when land becomes available. Our work in restoring habitat by removing invasive species on public and private land has taught us that conservation land must be managed to protect local biodiversity. This legislation will bolster and create new funding programs to help drive both acquisition and stewardship of new publicly owned greenspace.

As you know, species extinction is occurring at an alarming rate: current reports from the United Nations estimate that we are losing more than 150 – 170 unique species per day across the planet; the highest rate since the extinction of the dinosaurs! We must protect the unique biodiversity of Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake alone is home to more than 3,000 species of plants and animals, including 348 species of finfish, 173 species of shellfish, and roughly 30 species of waterfowl.

Conservation lands provide vital carbon sinks and create spaces that are resilient to the harmful effects of climate change. Additionally, these spaces contribute towards improved soil stabilization, temperature stability, and preservation of wildlife through expanded habitat. This conservation goal will contribute to protecting our water and air quality while providing outdoor places for Marylanders to connect with nature and the many associated mental and physical health benefits.

We ask for a favorable report on SB470 so that Maryland's rich plant and animal diversity can be better preserved and stewarded.

Respectfully,

**Beth Miller for the Green Towson Alliance**  
523 Murdock Road, Towson

**SB0470-Maryland the Beautiful Act-Budget Tax\_CJW-F**

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Budget and Taxation  
**Testimony on:** SB0470 – Maryland the Beautiful Act  
**Organization:** Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing  
**Submitting:** Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** March 1, 2023

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB470. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB470.

SB470 will create the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program to provide loans to land trusts to purchase land for conservation purposes; require the Governor to include in the annual budget funding for the Maryland Environmental Trust for grants through the Keep Maryland Beautiful Program; and establish the 40 x 40 Land Conservation Implementation Grant Program to support a goal of 40% of Maryland land preserved by 2040.

Currently, Maryland has conserved 28.7% of its lands and critical habitats (23% of total land mass) and only annually monitors ~11% of land under easement. Land preservation is critical to the protection of species and the habitats they depend on. The United Nations recently reported that 150 – 170 species permanently go extinct every day. In North America alone, since 1970, bird populations have dropped by more than 30%.

SB470 will set a goal of 40% of Maryland land preserved by 2040; dramatically improve funding available to urban land trusts; and invest in stewardship of lands impacted by climate change and invasive species. For these reasons, we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for SB470 in committee.

**sb470- Beautiful MD- B&T 3-1-'23.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lee Hudson

Position: FAV



**Delaware-Maryland Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Budget and Taxation Committee**  
on  
**Senate Bill 470**  
March 1, 2023  
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for care of the gifts of creation. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community in three judicatories across our State.

Our community addressed concern for a safe, healthy, flourishing environment that can sustain life in “Caring for Creation” (ELCA, 1993. A healthy environment is also a stated concern of our “*Caring for Health*,” 2003.) Stewardship of natural gifts and processes, through conservation and preservation policies, is wise and just because it protects what is for the benefit of all things now living.

And “all things now living” illustrates the need to defend and conserve a web of life. Undeveloped contexts are also habitat; they sequester carbon; they purify air and water; they buffer watersheds. So, we support preservation and conservation in the natural world for the sake of all things now living. For example, forest integrity and extent in Maryland was a stated interest of our community in 2008 (See LOPP/MD testimony before EHEA, Feb. 28, 2008 on SB431).

We previously identified two critical concerns: the constellation of issues from the greenhouse effect, and health- and life-sustaining air quality. Those have arisen as critical issues in international policy discourse, as well. An additional, bellwether issue is the confluence of habitat, species, and the eco- of “all things now living.” (As one interested advocate, I have taken to reporting that we’re living through a Devonian die-off.) Life is disappearing at a catastrophic rate everywhere on the planet. And as of now, the only place the human species has to live is the planet.

**Senate Bill 470** will support the preservation of more undeveloped Maryland geography as beautiful, life-supporting, necessary, naturally occurring space. We urge such a policy initiative. We urge the care and preservation of created (not owned) gifts within the target goals of **Senate Bill 470**. We ask a favorable report.

Lee Hudson

**SB470\_MDSierraClub\_fav 1Mar2023 (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Lily Fountain

Position: FAV





P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee: Budget and Taxation**

**Testimony on: SB470 “Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: March 1, 2023**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly supports SB470, the Maryland the Beautiful Act. This bill establishes a state goal of 30% of Maryland lands conserved by 2030 and 40% of lands conserved by 2040. To accomplish this goal the bill authorizes the existing state Smart Growth Subcabinet to develop and update every five years a plan to meet these goals. Within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), it creates several categories of funding to conserve agricultural, forested, cultural, and historical lands. These programs will be administered by the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET).

The programs include: 1) a \$10 million Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Fund, a one-time 2025 expense, to enable land trusts to quickly secure funds for newly available land and conservation easements and repay the loan at no lower than 1 point below the prime interest rate; additionally, \$235,000 shall be allocated to the MET each year for 2) Land Trust Capacity grants in support of monitoring and stewardship scholarships, equipment, and organizational trainings (\$50,000); 3) Stewardship Grants to land trusts to improve monitoring and stewardship of Maryland’s most important eased agricultural lands, forested lands, or lands facing a high degree of invasive species and/or climate change related threats and damage (\$50,000); and 4) Citizen Stewardship Awards to help community organizations develop innovative solutions to local environmental challenges (\$135,000).

The Maryland the Beautiful bill this year is not completely the same as last year's bill. The ten-million-dollar Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Fund was a component of last year’s bill. However, the tree stewardship funding in the 2022 bill passed last year as part of another bill, and this year a different bill (HB503/SB523, which we also strongly support) addresses creating urban greenspaces, which was part of the 2022 bill. New in this year's bill are the small grants to citizen community groups and land trusts to help these types of organizations maintain and steward these new lands.

The Sierra Club strongly supports this investment in the conservation of lands that help protect our communities from the ongoing effects of climate change. Maryland’s forests and farms provide valuable ecosystem services such as clean water, clean air, timber, pollination of agricultural plants, habitat for fisheries, and flood control.<sup>1</sup> Historically, the ecosystem service benefits of farms and forests did not have clearly established monetary values.<sup>2</sup> If a forest was logged, the monetary value of the timber was the primary consideration; only recently have the

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<sup>1</sup> University of Maryland Extension (2022). [Ecosystem services on forest and agricultural lands of Maryland 2013](#).

<sup>2</sup> The Wilderness Society (2001). [Economic Value of Forest Ecosystem Services: A Review](#).

goods and services provided by the forests been given a monetary value. There is now greater recognition of the value of forests in absorbing air pollutants such as carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate matter; reducing stormwater runoff; and offsetting carbon dioxide emissions. Maryland's Department of the Environment reported in the Maryland Forest Carbon inventory, for example, that forests offset 14.8% of state emissions.<sup>3</sup>

A recent statewide study of changes in forest cover and tree canopy in Maryland found that “protected lands experienced a significantly lower rate of forest loss and a much higher rate of total tree canopy increase compared with statewide rates. We conclude that protection benefits [land] conservation in Maryland.”<sup>4</sup>

In addition to these concrete benefits, this bill will move Maryland closer to the federal government's national goal of 30% of U.S. lands and waters conserved, and wildlife corridors connected by 2030.<sup>5</sup>

A related benefit of conserving more Maryland lands is the beneficial effect on the declining indicators of the state of nature. The first global-scale study of the links between people and nature found that global ecosystems have declined by 47%, 25% of species are threatened with extinction, the biomass of wild mammals has fallen by 82%, and 72% of indicators of nature that are important for quality of life for humans showed declines.<sup>6</sup> This study found that strengthening environmental laws and their implementation was one of the five most effective levers for stopping these declines. Here in Maryland, according to the DNR's 2015-2025 Maryland State Wildlife Action Plan, “there is clear consensus that the loss and degradation of habitats across the state from unplanned growth and unsustainable consumption remain the primary overarching threat to Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as is true nationwide.”<sup>7</sup> Given the number and size of the threats, this bill will help address this urgent need in a fiscally responsible manner.

Given the massive challenges of climate change, air and water quality, and species preservation, conserving lands is an excellent value. The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club strongly urges a favorable report for Maryland the Beautiful.

Lily Fountain  
Chair, Natural Places Committee  
[Lily.Fountain@MDSierra.org](mailto:Lily.Fountain@MDSierra.org)

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
[Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org](mailto:Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org)

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<sup>3</sup> Maryland Department of the Environment (2017). [Maryland Forest Carbon Inventory](#).

<sup>4</sup> Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Chesapeake Conservancy, & University of Vermont (November, 2022). [Technical Study on Changes in Forest Cover and Tree Canopy in Maryland](#).

<sup>5</sup> Sierra Club (N.D.) [30X30 Conservation Agenda](#).

<sup>6</sup> Diaz, S. et al. (20219). [Pervasive human-driven decline of life on Earth points to the need for transformative change](#). *Science*, 366, (6471), eaax3100. DOI: 10.1126/science.aax3100.

<sup>7</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources (2015). [Maryland State Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025](#), chapter 5.

# **SB470 Maryland the Beautiful Act 2023 support-writ**

Uploaded by: Marisa Olszewski

Position: FAV



March 1, 2023

Kim Coble  
Executive Director

2023 Board of  
Directors

Lynn Heller, Chair  
The Hon. Nancy Kopp,  
Treasurer  
Kimberly Armstrong  
Mike Davis  
Candace Dodson-Reed  
Verna Harrison  
Melanie Hartwig-Davis  
The Hon. Steve Lafferty  
Patrick Miller  
Bonnie L. Norman  
Katherine (Kitty)  
Thomas

**SUPPORT: SB 470 - Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB 470, the Maryland the Beautiful Act. This legislation makes important progress on land conservation in Maryland and is a priority bill of the environmental community. We thank Senator Elfreth for leadership supporting environmental conservation in Maryland.

This bill advances Maryland's land conservation efforts with the establishment of the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program. It also affirms Maryland's commitment to conserve 40% of land in our state by 2040 and provides much needed support to land trusts and others maintaining these lands and making the connections between the land and Marylanders through grant-supported programs.

In January of 2021, President Biden announced plans to conserve 30% of America's land and waters by 2030. Since then, many states have taken initiative to follow this path by creating their own state-led plans for land conservation. We are urging Maryland to join this important goal, but to commit to go even further by looking to have 40% of land conserved by the year 2040.

To achieve this, the Maryland the Beautiful Act would:

1. Allocate a one-time expenditure of \$10 million to create a revolving loan, rapid-response fund land trusts would be able to borrow from to quickly act when important properties for conservation become available. Revolving loans are sustainable and fiscally-prudent investments to provide financial support while ensuring the opportunity to use that support remains viable for multiple instances and in perpetuity.
2. Increase popular grant programs to ensure greater success in habitat conservation, through funds for land stewardship capacity building and improvement, and the promotion of citizen stewardship through the popular Keep Maryland Beautiful grant program. This grant program has been well utilized throughout the state, extending opportunities to connect communities with land stewardship behavior.
3. Ensure considerations for land conservation include – coordination with local communities and private landowners; improved access to nature for all people in Maryland; sequestering greenhouse gas emissions; and landscape scale conservation that promotes the continuance of important native species and/or stabilizes ecosystems.

Maryland LCV recognizes the importance of planning for and establishing bold conservation goals to protect biodiversity, supporting goals to mitigate the effects of climate change, and increasing access to natural spaces in Maryland. Investing in conservation is a prudent use of state financial resources, supporting the sustainability and livability of our state for future generations. For these reasons we support the enactment of the Maryland the Beautiful Act and urge a favorable report on SB 470.

# **Dr Mark Southerland Testimony in Support of SB470**

Uploaded by: Mark Southerland

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly – Senate Budget & Taxation Committee – February 28, 2023

## **Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act) – SB 470**

### TESTIMONY OF DR. MARK SOUTHERLAND – **SUPPORT**

I am a professional ecologist who has served on the boards of Maryland Science Council, Maryland Water Monitoring Council, Safe Skies Maryland, Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board, Patapsco Heritage Greenway, and Howard County Conservancy. I am speaking on behalf of the Howard County Conservancy, a nonprofit land trust that has been preserving land in Howard County since 1990 (howardnature.org).

#### **The Science is Clear**

Earth's foundational, billion-year-old environmental support system cannot be replaced. **Once species are gone, they are gone forever.** Today, as many as 1 million species of an estimated total 8 million species that exist on planet earth are threatened with extinction. Of all the plants and animals with whom we share the planet, only we have the power to choose the path our collective futures will take.

Over the past 50 years, more than 1 million acres of forestland and farmland in Maryland have been developed, imperiling native species, ecosystem services, and the economy and recreation that relies on our cherished lands. In May 2022, the Biden administration issued Conserving and Restoring *America the Beautiful*, detailing steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. **Maryland should do the same to provide adequate space for nature and bolster our state's strategy to mitigate the impacts of climate change.**

#### **This is the Right Bill:**

The *Maryland the Beautiful* Act responds to this nature crisis by setting a statewide conservation goal and providing the tools to advance conservation progress and ensure that all Maryland communities can benefit:

- **Establishing a goal to protect open space** – through Smart Growth Subcabinet
- **Making greenspace more equitable** – through Greenspace Equity Program
- **Empowering conservation efforts** – through Revolving Loan Fund
- **Improving the health of forestland** – through Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Program
- **Contributing to climate resiliency** – by offsetting greenhouse gas emissions

**The Howard County Conservancy is a Case Study in What Can Be Accomplished:**

Acting as a land trust since 1990, the Conservancy:

- Will reach the milestone of 2,000 acres preserved in Howard County through our easement programs
- These conservation easements provide preservation options for private property owners, providing important tax incentives to individuals
- Through a new grant funded program, we are now able to purchase conservation easements from nonprofits like churches, who otherwise would not benefit from the tax benefits of a donated easement
- Our easements come with long-term stewardship responsibilities for our organization and this legislation will assist the many land trusts like the Conservancy to ensure the health of these important ecosystems.

**Maryland has the chance to do our part to conserve nature and reap its economic, climate, and quality-of-life benefits for the generations to come.**

We respectfully ask for your favorable report on SB 470.

Thank you on behalf of the Howard County Conservancy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Southerland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mark Southerland, PhD  
Board of Trustees  
Howard County Conservancy  
10520 Old Frederick Road  
Woodstock, MD 21163



**SB 470\_CBF\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **Senate Bill 470**

Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs  
(Maryland the Beautiful Act)

Date: March 1, 2023	Position: <b>Favorable</b>
To: Education Energy & The Environment Committee Budget & taxation Committee	From: Matt Stegman, MD Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 470 which sets a new state land conservation goal of 30% of Maryland land protected by 2030, and an additional goal of 40% of land conserved by 2040. The bill furthers this goal through the creation of a Rapid Response Revolving Loan Fund that will assist small and medium-sized land trusts in preserving critical lands right away.

The Chesapeake Bay's land-to-water ratio is 15:1—larger than any other coastal estuary in the world. When the land suffers from pollution and poor management the Bay's water quality also worsens. A profound relationship exists between the water of the Chesapeake Bay and the 64,000 square miles of land comprising the Bay's watershed. Approximately 100,000 rivers and streams run into the Bay. This tributary system directly connects farms, forests, and developed communities in six states and the District of Columbia with the Chesapeake.

Today, there are 18 million residents in the watershed, and the number is expected to grow to 19.4 million by 2025. By the late 1800s, 40 to 50 percent of the watershed's forest had been cleared of trees, according to the Chesapeake Bay Program. Between 1982 and 1997, the Bay watershed lost more than 750,000 acres of forestland to development, about 100 acres per day. Wetlands were equally decimated. These natural filters are critical to protecting the Bay from challenges like climate change, sea-level rise, and species loss.

CBF firmly believes it is possible to restore the Bay. But the continuing loss of natural filters and vital land-based ecosystems makes restoration of the Bay, and the achievement of the goals of the [Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint](#), much more difficult to achieve. Land conservation is an essential part of the Bay's recovery.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 470.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*

**MD Catholic Conference\_FAV\_SB0470.pdf**

Uploaded by: MJ Kraska

Position: FAV



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

SB 470

**Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

**Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 470 establishes certain goals and programs related to land conservation; establishing the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program to provide loans to certain land trusts to purchase land for conservation purposes; establishing the Land Preservation Rapid Response Advisory Committee to review loan applications and make recommendations on which projects to fund; establishing the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Fund; requiring the Governor to include \$10,000,000 in the fiscal year 2025 budget bill for the Fund.

In his encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')*, Pope Francis tells us, *"There is a growing sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect nature, along with a growing concern, both genuine and distressing, for what is happening to our planet... Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it."* Senate Bill 470 works toward a future where natural areas are valued and protected, biodiversity is recognized as our tool to fight climate change, and money is devoted to community-driven greenspace creation.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 470.



**Elfreth\_FAV\_SB470.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Elfreth

Position: FAV

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH  
*Legislative District 30*  
Anne Arundel County



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 104  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3578 · 301-858-3578  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3578  
Fax 410-841-3156 · 301-858-3156  
Sarah.Elfreth@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Subcommittees*

Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety,  
Transportation, and Environment

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and  
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area

Chair, Joint Subcommittee on  
Program Open Space/Agricultural  
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 23, 2023

**Testimony in Favor of SB470**  
**Natural Resources – Land Conservation – Establishment of Goals and Programs**  
**(Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, & members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 470 to provide the necessary programs and resources for Maryland to conserve 30% of State land by 2030 (30 x 30) and 40% of State land by 2040 (40 x 40).

Considering the current threats to wildlife habitats and the frequent emission of greenhouse gasses, Maryland should waste no time in stepping up our conservation efforts. According to the United Nations, humans have “significantly altered” three-fourths of the Earth’s land, threatening one million plants and animals and causing between 150 and 170 species to become extinct per day. Likewise, the burning of fossil fuels is polluting our air and increasing the risk of climate change, making the conservation of greenhouse gas absorbing plants essential. As a defense against these threats, the preservation of land and green infrastructure will be our first line of defense in mitigating the impacts of more severe storms and rising temperatures.

The dangers that our environment is currently facing has prompted leaders across the world to call for conservation of 50% of the Earth’s landmass. In the early months of his presidency, the Biden Administration enacted the “America the Beautiful” initiative, a proposal to preserve and restore 30% of the country’s land and water by the year 2030.

With programs like the Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and Program Open Space, Maryland has been able to preserve 23% of its land and water and 28.7%

of its land and critical habitats. We should build on our current progress by providing tools, strategy, and resources to protect Maryland habitats from further degradation.

**In order to support the process of reaching our 30 x 30 and 40 x 40 goals, this legislation:**

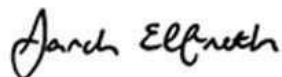
1. Sets in law that it is the intent of the General Assembly to conserve 30% of our lands by 2030 and 40% by 2040.
2. Creates a \$10 million Land Trust Rapid Response Revolving Loan Fund Program to expedite the process of securing land for smaller and medium-sized trusts that is operated by the Maryland Environmental Trust.
3. Creates an advisory committee to make recommendations on the use of the loan fund.
4. Empowers the Smart Growth Subcabinet to coordinate actions of governments and nongovernmental partners to meet our conservation goals – but also develop a plan by 2024 on how we are going to meet the goals outlined in the bill, and submit annual reports to the General Assembly on our progress.

**To support the nonprofit actors that will help us reach our conservation goals, this legislation will:**

1. Create the 40 x 40 Land Conservation Grant Program to provide support to organizations dedicated to implementation of the conservation goals established by the Bill – and that provide support and education opportunities to our conservation community.
2. Create citizen stewardship grants to be awarded to nonprofits, community organizations, schools, and municipalities to expand environmental education and stewardship opportunities.
3. Create small but meaningful grants to be awarded to land trusts to support further stewardship and technology support for their critical monitoring efforts.

With the funding opportunities, goals, and strategy created by SB470, this legislation will establish Maryland as a nation-wide leader in further conservation of our State's lands. Once again, I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 470 to provide the necessary funding and expertise to conserve these critical state lands.

Sincerely,



Sarah Elfleth



**SRLT.30x30.testimony.2.28.2023senate.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Knebel

Position: FAV



# SCENIC RIVERS LAND TRUST

PROTECTING ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY'S LAND AND WATER

**Date:** February 28, 2023  
**Bill Number:** SB 470 – Natural Resources – Land Conservation – Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)  
**Committee:** Senate – Budget & Tax  
**Position:** Support

Scenic Rivers Land Trust supports the Maryland the Beautiful Act (SB 470).

SB 470 would set a goal for Maryland to have 30% of its lands conserved by 2030 and 40% by 2040. Keeping a significant portion of our land wild and open allows nature and our communities to be resilient towards severe weather, helps our food systems to survive, and gives Maryland residents places of beauty, solace, and recreation.

Not only does it set a goal to measure our progress by, but it also increases the pace at which land trusts can save vulnerable parcels. A \$10,000,000 revolving loan program will allow land trusts to access funds in the nick of time to save an imperiled and important property. This is critical to these nonprofits (Scenic Rivers Land Trust being one of them) that witness precious properties slip through their fingers because they couldn't get grant funding fast enough. Often grant funding takes two to four years to obtain, which far too long when a property is already on the open market.

For example, in 2020 a 45-acre property became available for sale that was on our "Top 100" list of most important properties to conserve in Anne Arundel County. The landowners were only willing to wait a year for us to raise funds and purchase the property. Unfortunately, \$2.7 million is difficult for a small nonprofit to raise in that short amount of time. The landowners now have a contract with a developer, and they have recently submitted a subdivision application to build 40 homes.

I am delighted to see that in light of setting goals to increase the pace of conservation, this bill also provides annual funding to land trusts for stewardship, which is vital funding in ensuring that the land we protect stays protected in perpetuity. Our portfolios of conserved land are ever growing, and therefore we need ever increasing funding to keep a watchful eye and provide a helpful hand on the 93,000+ acres of land protected by local land trusts.

By passing the Maryland the Beautiful Act, we can help ensure that nature and people will continue to thrive in Maryland today and long into the future. We appreciate your service and respectfully request a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Sarah Knebel  
Executive Director  
Scenic Rivers Land Trust

**Anne Arundel County\_FAV\_SB470.pdf**

Uploaded by: Steuart Pittman

Position: FAV



March 1, 2023

**Senate Bill 470**

**Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs  
(Maryland the Beautiful Act)  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Maryland the Beautiful Act will establish land conservation goals for the State, and create financing structures, including grant and loan programs, to help meet those goals.

Anne Arundel County shares the legislature's commitment to preserving our natural resources and supporting and enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities. This commitment took on new importance during the pandemic, as public use of and demand for parks and open space increased dramatically. Every Marylander deserves the ability to enjoy outdoor parks and open spaces.

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 SB 470.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stuart Pittman".

Stuart Pittman  
County Executive

# **SB470TeddyJorgensenSGA\_fav.pdf**

Uploaded by: Teddy Jorgensen

Position: FAV

**Committee:** Budget and Taxation

**Testimony on:** SB0470 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)

**Position:** Favorable

27 February 2023

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and the members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports S.B.0470, the “Maryland the Beautiful Act” that requires 30% of Maryland land to be set aside for conservation by 2030 and 40% by 2040, as well as requiring creation of a series of funds and grants that would make it easier for trusts and conservation organizations to secure and monitor land for preservation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this fascinating and crucial piece of legislation. My name is Teddy Jorgensen, and I am a freshman with the University of Maryland Student Government Association’s Sustainability Council. On behalf of our SGA, as well as environmentally concerned students everywhere, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 470 in order to secure a greener and more enjoyable future for Marylanders everywhere.

I have grown up in Maryland’s woods, wetlands, and waterways, camping both with the Scouts BSA and recreationally since before I can remember. As I both fell in love with the natural world and became increasingly worried about its future in an age of global warming and suburban sprawl, I decided to major in Environmental Science and Policy at UMD to help be part of the solution. I believe that giving our natural land the respect and protection it deserves should be one of our state’s highest priorities. The recent federal call to preserve 30% of our nation’s lands by 2030 is a commendable one, but I know that my “America in Miniature” can go above and beyond: both the additional goal of 40% conservation by 2040 and the series of funds and grant programs allocated to conservation under this bill will help transform Maryland into a state where sustainable development and pristine outdoor amenities can go hand in hand. One day, my generation’s children will grow up continuing to enjoy the same camping and hiking that I did, all thanks to the passage of the Maryland the Beautiful Act, and thus I respectfully request a favorable report on SB0470.

Thank you,



*Teddy Jorgensen, Sustainability Committee Member*  
*University of Maryland — College Park,*  
*fjorgens@terpmail.umd.edu*

# **SB 470 - Maryland the Beautiful - Support 3.01.23.**

Uploaded by: Wendy Stringfellow

Position: FAV



**FOREVER**  
MARYLAND

***Enhancing and Advancing Land Conservation***

**Board of Directors**

Nick Dilks,  
*Chair*

Will Cook,  
*Vice Chair*

Adair Stifel,  
*Treasurer*

John Griffin,  
*Secretary*

Mark Conway  
Francis (Joe) Hickman  
Mitch Neitzey  
Steve Quarles  
Barry Salisbury

Date: February 24, 2023  
Bill Number: SB 470 - Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)  
Committee: Senate – Budget & Tax  
Position: Support

Forever Maryland supports, SB 470 (Maryland the Beautiful) for the purpose of increasing the conservation of Maryland’s most important lands, while providing new support for monitoring and the stewardship of these lands. This bill sets a new state land preservation goal; creates a Rapid Response Revolving Loan Fund to help smaller and medium sized land trusts secure critical lands, quickly; and supports community nonprofits in improving the stewardship and health of lands.

Gary Burnett,  
*MET Board Liaison*

Wendy Stringfellow  
*President*

**Advisory Council**

Rob Etgen  
Ann H. Jones

Approximately 29% of Maryland’s physical lands (not including waterways) are protected. The Maryland the Beautiful Act would create a new statewide conservation goal of conserving 40% of Maryland land by 2040, but it doesn’t stop there. Under direction of the Smart Growth Subcabinet, a plan would be put in place to achieve “40X40.” This bill provides greater resources to help the on-the-ground nonprofit land trusts, local governments, and other organizations that are working directly with landowners to conserve their land and improve the health of the lands.

This bill supports a one-time funded local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program, capitalized at \$10 million and administered by the Maryland Environmental Trust, to help local land trusts rapidly secure priority properties to accelerate private land conservation. After the land is eased, the funds would be paid back to the revolving loan fund program. The bill would also create a Maryland Environmental Trust “40X40 Implementation Grant” to help coordinate and support the implementation of greater land conservation.

Additionally, the Maryland the Beautiful bill would greatly improve upon the current *Keep Maryland Beautiful* grant program to support long-term stewardship of eased lands – especially agricultural lands, forest lands, or lands facing high degree of climate or invasive species threats. Greater support would also go to the current Citizen Stewardship Grant program, to support nonprofits that are on the front lines of community-led efforts to clean and green communities across the state.

Land trusts are tasked with permanently protecting Maryland’s most important spaces. From reduced flooding, carbon sequestration, species protection, increased local foods, greater recreation opportunities and much more, eased lands can provide numerous ecosystem services and public benefits.

We appreciate your service and respectfully request a favorable report.

For further information, please contact Forever Maryland’s Program and Policy Director, Josh Hastings, at 410-251-5268 or [Josh@ForeverMaryland.org](mailto:Josh@ForeverMaryland.org).

**FOREVER MARYLAND**

2331 Rock Spring Road | Forest Hill, MD 21050 | 443-640-1034 | [www.ForeverMaryland.org](http://www.ForeverMaryland.org)



**230228-SB470-30-40prcnt-Ind-cnsrvatn.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christine Hunt

Position: UNF

Christine Hunt and Jay Crouthers  
1014 Dockser Drive  
Crownsville, MD 21032

February 28, 2023

Maryland General Assembly  
Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee  
Annapolis, MD

RE: SB 470 – Natural Resources – Land Conservation – Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)

Dear Senators,

We oppose SB 470 and respectfully request that you vote against it.

This bill is being used to promote the Agenda 2030/2040 goal as set by the United Nations, that very few citizens agree with, including us.

Under the guise of “land conservation” this bill would further restrict huge percentages of land to development of any kind. This would mean that an individual or family could not purchase certain lands to have a peaceful, remote location on which to live and raise a family, or grow their own food among other things.

It is a means to force people to live in areas designated by the government and would increase the populations densities in those areas. This is insanity and not what the citizens of this State desire.

It is more government overreach that will restrict basic freedoms of movement and the right to live where we please. It also increases government spending by millions of dollars over time and furthers the climate change agenda. It is time that the government stops this incessant push to control us.

Please vote against this bill.

Sincerely,

Christine Hunt and Jay Crouthers

**MBIA Letter of Opposition SB 470.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: UNF

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building,  
3 West Wing 11 Bladen St.,  
Annapolis, MD, 21401

**RE: MBIA Letter of Opposition SB 470 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

Dear Chairman Barve:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB 470 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**. MBIA **Opposes** the Act in its current version.

This bill would establish a trust fund and incentive program for the state to spend money buying land for the purposes of preventing development and incentivizing landowners to forgo development. MBIA opposes this measure. While maintaining natural resources are important, it is reckless to create a committee specifically designated to preventing any state development and handing them 10 million dollars to make land purchases for no functional purpose. The representatives on the board require no academic or professional expertise in land development, forest conservation, project management, environmental impact analysis or any other relevant field required to make this proposal tenable.

Additionally, this committee would be targeted at lands that are currently eligible to be developed under Maryland Law, which is already a small portion of the state's landmass. This bill takes no regard for human habitation and needs. According to Freddie Mac and the National Realtors Association, Maryland currently has a 120,000 housing unit deficit. This number is growing under current state policies having risen there from an estimated 82,000 unit deficit in 2021. It is reckless and irresponsible to create a new entity for the sole purpose of diminishing the already desperately needed developable land in order to meet the massive housing shortfall that is only growing a regulations new initiative make it more expensive and more difficult to find places to build these needed homes.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or [lgraf@marylandbuilders.org](mailto:lgraf@marylandbuilders.org).

cc: Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

# **SB 470 Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals**

Uploaded by: Tom Ballentine

Position: UNF

February 28, 2023

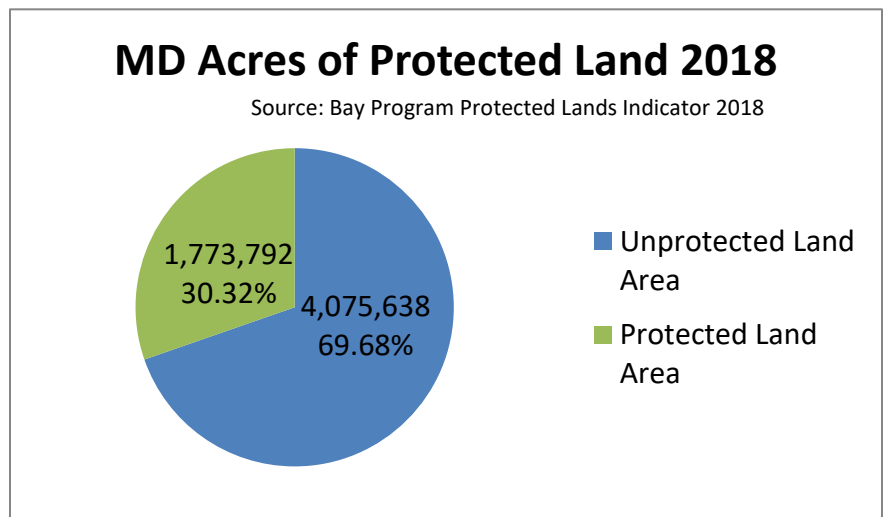
The Honorable, Guy Guzzone, Chair  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Unfavorable: SB 470 – Land Conservation Establishment of Goals and Programs**

Dear, Chair Guzzone and Committee Members:

The NAIOP Maryland Chapters representing more than 700 companies involved in all aspects of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use real estate, recommends an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 470 and, instead, including the purposes of the bill into a more wholistic systems approach that can build a framework to set goals for Maryland’s designated growth areas, local green spaces and rural conservation areas that will serve Maryland’s needs for the next generation.

According to Chesapeake Bay Program data, by 2018 30% of Maryland’s land area was protected by conservation and other easements. Senate Bill 470 sets a goal of permanently preserving 40% of the state’s land area which would increase the land under preservation by an additional 565,000 acres to a total of 2.3 million acres. The goals of the bill emphasize the need to increase open spaces within urban areas as a part of that conservation goal.



Maryland’s Priority Funding Areas were first designated 25 years ago. At that time they were zoned and sized to accomodate

population growth over a 20-year period. Today the growth areas of the state have diminished development capacity and are not in position to serve as the future housing and employment centers they are supposed to be.

Senate Bill 470 sets up a planning process that is focused only on meeting preservation goals. We believe a more comprehensive approach that balances future growth and land conservation goals woud produce better overall results. Also, the costs of the program could potentially be reduced by counting land in certain conservation zoning categories toward the goals.

Sincerely,

Tom Ballentine, Vice President for Policy  
NAIOP Maryland Chapters -*The Association for Commercial Real Estate*

cc: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee Members  
Nick Manis – Manis, Canning Assoc.

**SB0470\_DNR\_LOI\_B&T\_3-1-23.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Turgeon

Position: INFO



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary  
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

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March 1, 2023

**BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 470 – First Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Maryland the Beautiful Act**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION WITH AMENDMENTS**

**EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION:**

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*Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program*

SB 470 would establish a significant new program, the “Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program,” to be administered by the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), a unit of the Department, for providing revolving loans to land trusts in Maryland to assist them in their purchase of conservation land or easements. The loans would be made on a rolling basis, and a land trust that receives a loan from the program would repay the loan after the property has been placed under easement or transferred to a state or local government entity. The bill proposes that in fiscal year 2025 the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$10,000,000 to establish the revolving loan fund.

MET proposes amendments to Sections 3-214, 3-215, and 3-216 of SB 470 that will provide necessary clarification and guidance to MET’s staff and Board of Trustees in effectively administering this new program. These include provisions for MET to establish program processes and procedures, loan terms, and a timeframe for loan repayment, as well as language stating a state or local government entity is not obligated to accept an easement or transfer of land acquired through the loan fund. This would be to account for if or when a property may not be consistent with the goals and/or mission of the state or local government.

*Other grants established by SB 470*

SB 470 would also establish the new “40 x 40 Land Conservation Implementation Grant Program” to be administered by MET in support of the land conservation goals set forth in the bill. This grant of \$250,000 would be awarded annually on a competitive basis to a statewide nonprofit supporting conservation of land in Maryland for presenting educational conferences and training for land trusts, as well as providing resources for land trust organizational support and capacity building. SB 470 also calls for an increase in state funding, \$235,000 annually, for the Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) suite of grant programs that MET administers per Nat. Res. Art. Sec 3-210.

MET would request consideration of additional staff to implement the bill’s proposed new programs and funding.

The amendments also delete what would be a duplicative setting and reporting of land conservation, recognizing the existing Managing for Results budget process, as well as the Land Preservation Dashboard from the Maryland Department of Planning website.

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)  
[emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov](mailto:emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov) ♦ 410-260-8426 (office) ♦ 443-223-1176 (cell)



**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

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SB 470 establishes two new grant programs to be administered by MET, and increases the funding for the existing Keep Maryland Beautiful (KMB) grants program, which MET administers since 1967 in accordance with Nat. Res. Art. Sec 3-210. KMB provides grants on an annual basis to help volunteer-based nonprofit groups, communities, schools, and land trusts in Maryland support environmental education projects, litter removal, and citizen stewardship, and to protect natural resources in urban and rural areas. In 2022, KMB awarded 85 grants totaling \$320,000, both of which were record figures. The increase of funds proposed by SB 470 would be a much welcomed addition of funds to the program.

**BILL EXPLANATION:**

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SB 470 establishes goals and programs related to land conservation in Maryland. It establishes a goal that 30% of the lands in the state will be conserved by 2030, and a goal that 40% of the lands will be conserved by 2040. The bill establishes the new Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program to be administered by MET for providing loans to land trusts in the State to purchase land for conservation purposes, and it creates a \$10 million revolving loan fund as a special, nonlapsing fund starting in FY 2025. SB 470 provides annual funding starting in FY 2025 to MET to be used for providing grants through MET's Keep Maryland Beautiful Program. The bill establishes a new 40 x 40 Land Conservation Implementation Grant Program to be administered by MET to support implementation of land conservation goals in the State. Finally, the bill requires the Smart Growth Subcabinet to coordinate land conservation partners' efforts in meeting and reporting the State's conservation goals.

BY:

(To be offered in the Budget and Taxation Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 470

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 6, after “purposes;” insert “increasing the number of Maryland Environmental Trust full-time employees to administer the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program; establishing the elements of the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program;” and in line 11, after “Program;” insert “increasing the number of Maryland Environmental Trust full-time employees to administer the grant programs;”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 3, after line 27, insert:

**“(C) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2024, THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT SHALL INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES IN THE TRUST BY ONE PERMANENT, CLASSIFIED POSITION TO ADMINISTER THE GRANTS IN PARAGRAPH (B)(1) OF THIS SECTION.**

**(D) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION IN AN AMOUNT NECESSARY TO FUND THE ONE PERMANENT, CLASSIFIED POSITION REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION AND RELATED OPERATING COSTS.**

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 4, after line 7, insert:

**“(F) “LAND TRUST” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 3-2A-01(D) OF THIS ARTICLE.”;**

in line 8, strike “(F)” and substitute “(G)”; after line 9, insert:

**(H) “TRUST” MEANS THE MARYLAND ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST.”;**

strike beginning with the second “AND” in line 14 down through “MANNER” in line 16; in line 18, after “PURCHASE” insert “FEE SIMPLE OR EASEMENT INTERESTS IN REAL”; in the same line, after “PROPERTY” insert “FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES”; in line 26, after “UNDER” insert “A CONSERVATION”; and after line 28, insert:

“(D) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION OBLIGATES A STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITY TO ACCEPT OR PURCHASE FROM A LAND TRUST A CONSERVATION EASEMENT OR TRANSFERRED PROPERTY PURCHASED WITH A PROGRAM LOAN.

(E) NOTWITHSTANDING PARAGRAPH (C)(2) OF THIS SECTION, A LAND TRUST SHALL REPAY A PROGRAM LOAN AND ANY ACCRUED INTEREST NOT LESS THAN FIVE YEARS AFTER RECEIVING THE PROGRAM LOAN, UNLESS THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVES AN EXTENSION OF TIME BASED ON EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

(F) EXCEPT AS AUTHORIZED IN THIS SUBTITLE, THE TRUST MAY SET THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE PROGRAM LOANS.

(G) IF THE TRUST APPROVES AN APPLICANT’S REQUEST FOR A PROGRAM LOAN, THE TRUST SHALL PREPARE THE LOAN DOCUMENTS.

(H) IF A LAND TRUST VIOLATES ANY PROVISION OF THE LOAN DOCUMENTS OR CEASES TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBTITLE, ON REASONABLE NOTICE TO THE LAND TRUST, THE TRUST MAY EXERCISE ANY REMEDY AVAILABLE UNDER LAW, INCLUDING ANY REMEDIES PROVIDED FOR IN THE LOAN DOCUMENTS.”

(I) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT KNOWINGLY MAKE OR CAUSE TO BE MADE ANY FALSE STATEMENT OR REPORT, INCLUDING ANY UNDERSTATEMENT OR OVERSTATEMENT OF FINANCIAL CONDITION FOR A NEW LOAN OR AFFECTING A LOAN ALREADY MADE UNDER THIS SUBTITLE:

(i) IN ANY APPLICATION OR IN ANY DOCUMENT FURNISHED TO THE TRUST; OR

(ii) FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING THE ACTION OF THE TRUST ON AN APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING ANY ACTION OF THE TRUST AFFECTING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WHETHER OR NOT SUCH ASSISTANCE MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXTENDED.

(2) ANY PERSON OR ANY AIDER OR ABETTOR, WHO VIOLATES ANY PROVISION OF THIS SUBTITLE, IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$50,000 OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 5 YEARS OR BOTH.”

AMENDMENT NO. 4

On page 5, after line 2, insert:

**“(E) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2024, THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT SHALL INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES IN THE TRUST BY THREE PERMANENT, CLASSIFIED POSITIONS TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.**

**(F) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION IN AN AMOUNT NECESSARY TO FUND THE THREE PERMANENT, CLASSIFIED POSITIONS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION AND RELATED OPERATING COSTS.**

**(G) THE TRUST SHALL ESTABLISH APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM LOANS.”;**

in line 3, strike “(E)” and substitute “(H)”; in line 7, strike beginning with “FINAL” through “COMMITTEE” and substitute “CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES”; and strike beginning with “EXECUTIVE” in line 8 down through “COMMITTEE” in line 9 and substitute “BOARD OF TRUSTEES”.

**AMENDMENT NO. 6**

On page 6, in line 10, after “EARNINGS;” insert

**“(3) REPAYMENTS OF PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST FROM LOANS MADE FROM THE FUND;”**

and in line 11, strike “(3)” and substitute “(4)”.

**AMENDMENT NO. 7**

On page 9, strike beginning with “(D)” in line 1 down through “WEBSITE.” in line 17.