

February 20, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

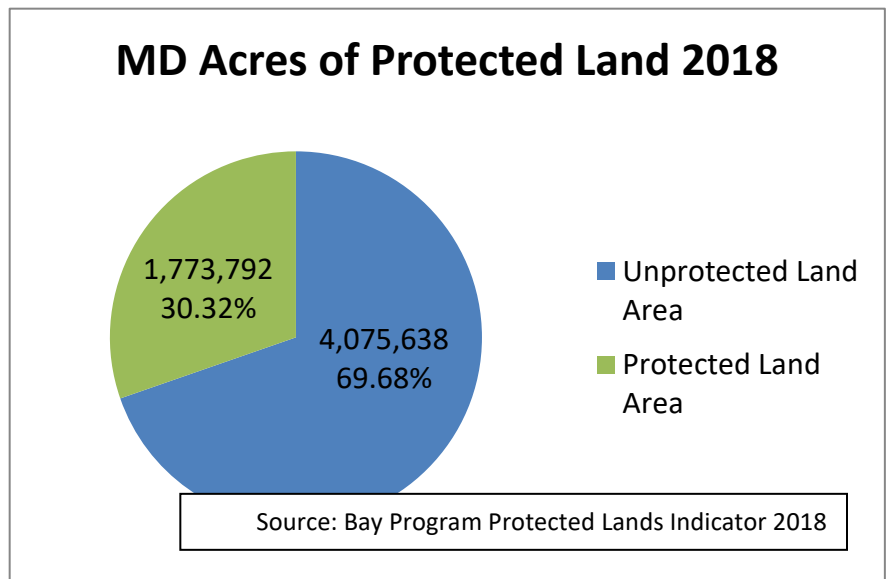
Unfavorable: HB 631 – Land Conservation Establishment of Goals and Programs

Dear, Chair Barve 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 House Bill 631 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 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. House Bill 631 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 30 years ago. At that time they were zoned and sized to accomodate development over a 20-year period.



House Bill 631 sets up a planning process that is focused only on meeting preservation goals. The responsibilities of long range planning should be to balance future growth needs and land conservation to serve Maryland for the next 30 years.

Sincerely,

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

cc: House Environment and Transportation Committee Members
Nick Manis – Manis, Canning Assoc.