



March 7, 2023  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Brave, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Kyle Hart, and I am writing today on behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). NPCA's mission is to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations. We have more than 1.7 million members and supporters nationwide, with more than 34,000 in Maryland. I am writing today in support of HB 1201.

Maryland is blessed with 18 units of the National Park Service, including Antietam National Battlefield, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Greenbelt Park, Assateague National Seashore, and more. According to the National Park Service, in 2021, 6.7 million park visitors spent an estimated \$247 million in local gateway regions while visiting NPS lands in Maryland. These expenditures supported a total of 2,940 jobs, \$130 million in labor income, \$215 million in value added, and \$344 million in economic output. National Parks are a huge part of Maryland's history, culture, and economy. These are areas that have been entrusted to the care of Maryland's elected officials by Congress and the American Public. This responsibility extends to Maryland's General Assembly members.

Unfortunately, threats to Maryland's National Parks and other preserved green space continue to pop up in all corners of the state. Due to increased development threats, environmental organizations like NPCA and federal agencies like the National Park Service must continue to push back on development proposals that threaten these precious areas. Oftentimes, the Maryland General Assembly is powerless to push back on harmful proposals that impact these state and federal resources. Delegate Solomon's HB 1201 would attempt to rectify this problem on large Public-Private Partnership proposals, also known as P3s.

Public-private partnerships can come in many shapes and sizes. And they are often a net-positive for state's that work to implement them. P3s can work to leverage private dollars for state benefit. Unfortunately, especially on large-scale infrastructure projects, the state has the potential to be hung out to dry in the name of profits and the bottom line. In the name of keeping a project "viable," developers who are threatening environmental or historic resources will opt to ignore the concerns of agencies and environmental advocates. HB 1201 would ensure that this does not happen in Maryland.

P3s are designed to be a partnership between the state and private entities. Projects that negatively impact National Parks and other state resources can shift the balance of said partnership away from the public and towards the private element. In order to ensure that this does not happen in the future, NPCA urges a favorable report of HB 1201. Thank you.