



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 16, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Room 2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 645 Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act) - Letter of Information

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 645 - Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act). SB 645 creates the Maryland Office of Trails within the Maryland Department of Transportation as well as the Maryland Trail Advisory Commission. Further, the bill would require the Department to collaborate with other State agencies to develop a strategy for funding, constructing, maintaining, managing, and promoting the Maryland Trails Network. SB 645 also requires the Department, along with other state agencies, to participate in the coordination of providing staff, administrative support, and operating expenses for the Maryland Trails Advisory Commission.

The Department recognizes this bill's consideration of equity, environmental impact, and the public health benefits of providing greater access to trails for all Marylanders across the State. However, the Department respectfully requests that the Department be removed from sitting on the Commission and providing administrative, operational, and staffing support. The Department does not have the expertise within any of its units to sit on the Commission or advise/coordinate with the Maryland Trails Network, and therefore is requesting that the Department be removed from this bill.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs, at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary