

March 4, 2024

To: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
From: Suzanne and Robert O'Hatnick, residents of Ten Hills
Re: HB1358 - SUPPORT

Distinguished Members,

We are long time residents of Ten Hills, just across the highway from the Hunting Ridge neighborhood and Leakin Park. We have always considered Leakin Park a wonderful asset - a place to do bird watching, hiking, bicycle riding, miniature train riding (for grandchildren!), and attending outdoor concerts and the Herb Festival. While volunteers do a great job of caring for the park, they cannot do it all, and it has long been neglected by the City that simply does not have the resources to maintain a park of that size.

We support HB 1358 that would make Leakin Park/Gwynns Falls into a State park - long overdue as every county in Maryland has a state park!

What does the park need? Better trash collection, maintenance of signage and buildings, expansion of playground equipment, more supervision by park rangers would be a start!

Leakin Park is a treasure, the largest city park in the nation (or so we have heard) and deserves to be maintained appropriately.

It was volunteers who raised the money and restored the chapel in Leakin Park. It is volunteers who lead birding outings and weekly hikes, who run the miniature railroad and train. It is volunteers who do most of the cleanup, but sadly, some people use the park as a dumping ground for old tires and furniture. That is a sad sight to see.

This is an easy bill to support!! We hope that each of you will lend your support - and come visit Leakin Park - for the Herb Festival later in the spring, or come for a hike or a bike ride!

With great hope for a positive outcome for HB1358,

Sincerely,

Suzanne and Robert O'Hatnick

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