



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

February 22, 2024

HB 228

Natural Resources – Maryland State Parks – Funds and Plan Alterations

House Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 228. The 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.

House Bill 228 seeks to implement the recommendations of the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission (MOREC); one recommendation being the promotion and growth of outdoor environmental education in the State.

The MOREC's recommendations present a valuable opportunity to enhance the recreational offerings within our state. Investing in outdoor education not only fosters physical health but also highlights the beauty of creation and allows for the appreciation of the wonders of the natural world.

The MCC appreciates the focus on promoting and growing outdoor environmental education in the state. Education, when coupled with an appreciation for the environment, becomes a powerful tool for cultivating responsible stewards of our environment. By allocating funds to support environmental educational initiatives, we contribute to the formation of a community that values and protects the natural world.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 228.