

MML-HB 530 - FAV.pdf

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Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 29, 2024

Committee: House Environment & Transportation

Bill: HB 530 - Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails – Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)

Position: Support

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) strongly supports House Bill 530, which supports the development, management, and use of a designated system of connected trails throughout the State.

Connected park trails offer many benefits to local governments, residents, and visitors. Integration can stimulate economic growth and tourism within a state by attracting outdoor enthusiasts and recreational users for longer recreational journeys spanning multiple parks or regions. In doing so, these visitors spend money on accommodations, dining, transportation, and related services. Increased attention to these areas can inspire new businesses that cater to outdoor activities like gear rentals and guided tours. This chain of positive outcomes creates employment opportunities and generates revenue for our communities.

Park trails that are connected across a state support economic vitality and contribute to the quality of life of our residents and visitors. For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the committee provide House Bill 530 with a favorable report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Theresa Kuhns
Angelica Bailey Thupari, Esq.
Bill Jorch
Justin Fiore

Chief Executive Officer
Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs
Director, Public Policy & Research
Deputy Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs

HB0530-ET_MACo_SUP.pdf

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Position: FAV



House Bill 530

*Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment
(Great Maryland Trails Act)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: February 29, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 530. This bill establishes a regime whereby Maryland policymakers can better account for and promote the state's diverse trail networks.

Trails are fast becoming a critical pillar of community design and economic development. Thanks to initiatives like Program Open Space, and a state and local focus on conservation, Maryland is blessed with an extensive network of interlocking trails. These networks, which crisscross Maryland's diverse geography, are increasingly proving to be a magnet for both tourism and attracting new residents. By aligning state resources to better account for existing trail networks and promote some of Maryland's recreational gems, HB 530 will prove to supercharge many of this state's existing assets.

As the developers and owners of large swaths of Maryland's trail ecosystem, counties are excited by the opportunities that may be unlocked by HB 530. As such, counties urge the Committee to give HB 530 a **FAVORABLE** report.

BikeMarylandetal-FAV-HB530 Great Maryland Trails A

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



HB530 – Great Maryland Trails Act of 2024

Environment & Transportation Committee

February 27, 2024

Position: Favorable

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee:

Our mission is to promote bicycling, increase safety, improve conditions, and provide a voice for bicyclists in Maryland who use bicycles for both transportation and recreation. We partner with advocacy organizations to promote vulnerable road user safety legislation and safe infrastructure on the state, county and municipal level. We know that the safest way to get more people biking, walking and using other active transportation modes is to provide safe infrastructure that is separated from vehicular traffic. Trails, also known as “shared-use paths” are used in urban, suburban and rural environments. But in order to get more people biking and walking, especially for transportation, they must be connected in a safe network. There are a variety of local and regional trail networks in Maryland such as the Baltimore Greenway, Capital Trails Network and Anne Arundel Trail Network but there is no similar plan for the state that ties these together. This bill would:

- Advance trails statewide used for transportation, recreation and tourism
- Bring more federal grant money into Maryland for trail-building
- Strengthen local jurisdictions capacity to plan, design and construct trails
- Interconnect the existing and planned trails across Maryland
- Expand both paved and natural surface trails in urban, suburban and rural areas

As bicycling has increased in popularity across the United States and provides many environmental, economic, and health benefits, there is a need for creating a safe transportation system which makes people the priority; separated infrastructure is the best way to help achieve zero injuries and fatalities while allowing all people to get to their destinations safely on foot or wheels.

2023 saw the highest number of traffic fatalities in Maryland since 2007 with approximately 600 fatalities and increasing numbers of pedestrians and cyclists. This bill will help to advance Maryland’s Vision Zero goals by enhancing the safety and protection of people who bike, walk, use assistive and other devices and have the added benefits of positively impacting our environment and promoting multi-modal and active transportation in our state.

Amendment

We recognize that this is a challenging fiscal year and we support amending the bill so that it aligns with the resource capacity of participating agencies, especially in MDOT, DNR and MDP. We do not envision any transfer of positions but prefer collaboration among the agencies named in the bill.

Please support HB530.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Baltimore Bicycling Club (BBC)

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (BikeAAA)

Bike Maryland

Bikemore

Bike HoCo

East Coast Greenway Alliance

Frederick Bicycle Coalition

Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway

Rails to Trails Conservancy

Terps for Bike Lanes

Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)

Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition

Maryland State Trails Office Overview_240205.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE OFFICE OF TRAILS

*Support for The Great
Maryland Trails Act
(HB530 / SB645)
to establish an
Advisory Committee
and State Office of
Trails for active
transportation and
outdoor recreation*



L-R: Jones Falls Trail, St. Michael's Nature Trail, Baltimore Greenway Network, B&A Trail

RESIDENTS SUPPORT TRAILS

A 2023 MDOT survey regarding walking, biking, and using micromobility devices found:

- 93%** walk or bike for exercise or recreation..
- 81%** want to see more shared use paths and wider sidewalks.
- 73%** want to see more shared use paths and protected bike lanes.

A statewide 2018 DNR survey found:

- +2/3** indicated that existing parks, trails, outdoor recreation facilities, and outdoor recreation programs are not completely meeting the needs of their households.
- 1/3** viewed improvements to trails as the key priority for enhancement.

STATE VISION

The Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan update calls for a vision to provide safe and convenient active transportation that supports equitable access for all.

SECURE FUNDING

A trails office can bring in tens of millions in federal funds, such as active transportation grants, especially into our smaller jurisdictions.

COORDINATION

A Maryland Trails Office will support coordination across multiple stakeholders within MDOT, MDDNR, MPOs, municipalities, and more.

TRAIL IMPACT

Multi-use trails produce a myriad of beneficial impacts that improve our economy, environment, public health, transportation equity, and quality of life.

Trails are a critical part of
Maryland's low-stress
**BIKE & PEDESTRIAN
NETWORK.**

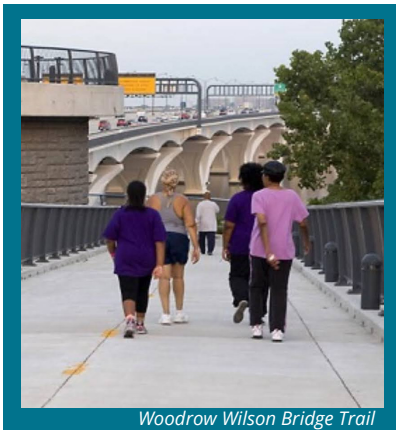


Maryland has the potential to be a top-tier state in the nation with multi-use trails that support activities that contribute to our economy, environment, and quality of life.

Maryland needs coordination, strategic oversight, and increased investment in trails.

Maryland needs a State Trails Office:

- Although Maryland has many exceptional and diverse trails, communities and advocates have identified **a large backlog of maintenance projects and new trail projects that need attention**.
- Current levels of local, state, federal, and private funding is insufficient to make Maryland a nationally recognized destination for trails. **A trails office can facilitate increased funding**, including through federal grants such as federal active transportation opportunities.
- **Other states, including neighboring Virginia, have established state trails offices** such as Florida, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.
- **New trails and connected networks support active transportation and recreation**, leveraging economic impacts, reducing dependence on fossil fuels, and meeting increasing demand from residents: For example in a 2021 Baltimore City Survey, *64% of respondents report walking more and 30% report biking more during COVID-19, while personal motor vehicle and transit use declined*.
- **Trails create connections locally, regionally (e.g., National Capital Trails Network) and even nationally (e.g., East Coast Greenway)**. Coordination across jurisdictional lines would benefit from additional support, coordination, and prioritization at the state level.
- Across rural, suburban, and urban America, **there are opportunities to shift short trips from driving to walking and biking by creating safe active-transportation networks**. More than half of all trips in the United States are within a 20-minute bike ride and more than one in four trips are within a 20-minute walk (2017 National Household Travel Survey), though the majority of these short trips are taken by automobile.



Economic impacts:

- **Maryland's outdoor recreation generates \$14 billion in consumer spending**, supports 109,000 jobs, \$4.4 billion in wages and salaries, and \$951 million in state and local tax revenue. Increased access and options for outdoor recreation and active transportation will increase participation and returns..
- The long-term economic benefit of investing in bicycling infrastructure projects, such as trail systems and other infrastructure investments, have significant returns on investment. On the Outer Banks of North Carolina a \$6.7 million investment reaps \$60 million a year, while in Vermont walking and bicycling events, businesses, and infrastructure investments supported 1,400 jobs and generated \$83 million in economic activity while costing \$9.8 million in 2009.
- According to the National Association of Realtors, **nearby trails and greenways raise property values** by an average of 3-5% -- and sometimes upwards of 15%.
- Even when governments must make funding cuts, **support for bicycling is not just another expenditure; it is a wise investment**. According to a study from the University of Massachusetts, an average 11.4 jobs per million dollars spent are created with bicycle projects, compared to 7.8 jobs for road-only projects.

Environmental impacts:

Trails promote natural resource management strategies that can simultaneously encourage public interest in habitat and natural landscapes, including by increasing the value of open space to the public by providing access, enhancing property values of communities, providing alternative modes of transportation that decrease air pollution from automobiles, support communities and businesses through eco-tourism, and more.

For example, a study of the Capital Trails Network found that a completed trail network of 990 miles would result in:

- **19,580 metric tons of Co2 emissions prevented every year**,
- **\$433 million in lifetime carbon storage value**, including \$62 million from an improved water supply, \$17.7 million from carbon sequestration, 12.4 million in flood control, \$4.6 million in air pollution removal,
- **49 million in reduced vehicle miles** traveled each year,
- **\$170 million in annual auto costs savings** and \$4.9 million saved on gas expenses, and
- An estimated **\$74,000 acres of tree cover protected**.



Health impacts:

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reports that **25% of Americans are inactive and that increasing our physical activity is one of the best things we can do for our health**. Making active transportation safer and more convenient creates a practical solution that integrates physical activity into daily routines.
- Heart disease and stroke are two leading causes of death in the United States. Getting at least 150 minutes a week of **moderate physical activity can lower risk for these diseases**.
- Businesses that support active transportation see benefits. **Employees who commute by bicycle take fewer sick days**.
- A study of the Capital Trails Network across the Washington, DC metropolitan area found that a completed trail network would result in **\$517 million in public health savings every year**.

Forever Maryland - HB530 SUPPORT - 2.27.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Josh Hastings

Position: FAV



Enhancing and Advancing Land Conservation

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Josh Hastings
Executive Director

Advisory Council

Ann Jones

Phyllis Joris

Date: February 27, 2024

Bill Number: **HB 530 - Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)**

Committee: House Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

Chairman Korman and Committee:

Forever Maryland supports **HB 530 - Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)** for the purpose of continuing to thoughtfully support the development of trails across the state. Trail connectivity is good for recreation, tourism, vibrant economies, and more.

This bill establishes the Maryland Office of Trails (MOT) and the Maryland Trails Advisory Commission (MTAC) within the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). The Maryland Office of Trails will work with local jurisdictions and regional efforts to facilitate the development, construction, maintenance, management, use, and promotion of the “Maryland Trails Network.”

Forever Maryland works with Maryland’s more than three dozen land trusts and conservation organizations to advance the conservation and restoration of lands. Our organization recognizes the immense work that is done among local conservation partnerships, local governments, nonprofit organizations and more, to work with landowners to provide for greater connectivity of communities and natural spaces – through trails. Having greater state coordinated support would be helpful for thoughtfully increasing public access to spaces while also providing greater means for connecting communities.

This bill is good for conservation and is a compliment to the work of nonprofits, local governments, and community organizations alike. For further information, please contact the organization’s Executive Director, Josh Hastings, at 410-251-5268 or Josh@ForeverMaryland.org.

We respectfully request a favorable report.

FOREVER MARYLAND FOUNDATION

PO Box 4489 | Salisbury, MD 21803 | 410-251-5268 | www.ForeverMaryland.org

HB530 - RMC Support Testimony - Establishment of M

Uploaded by: Megan D'Arcy

Position: FAV

Susan O'Neill, Chair

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Testimony in Support of
House Bill 530 – Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails –
Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)
February 29, 2024

The Rural Maryland Council supports House Bill 530 – Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails – Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act). This bill will establish the Maryland Office of Trails in the Department of Transportation to develop and maintain the Maryland Trails Network. In addition to all things related to oversee the office as well as collaborate with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and establishing the Maryland Trails Advisory Commission.

Trail networks can have significant economic impacts on rural communities, generating revenue, supporting local businesses, and enhancing property values. A November 2021 Economic Impact Report for the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) – one of the country’s most popular and celebrated long-distance biking and hiking paths from Cumberland, Maryland to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, shows a total economic impact of **\$121 million** in 2019 from direct, indirect, and induced impacts in the GAP region. <https://gaptrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2021-Great-Allegheny-Passage-Economic-Impact-Report-Spreads.pdf>.

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis released data in 2022 that showed outdoor recreation generates **\$1.1 trillion** in economic output (2.2% GDP), 4.98 million jobs and comprises 3.2 of U.S. employees. [Outdoor recreation contributes over \\$1 Trillion to the U.S. economy - Outdoor Recreation Roundtable](#)

Key economic benefits associated with trail networks in rural areas include:

- *Tourism and Recreation:* Tourism is a primary economic driver in rural areas. Trail networks attract tourists and outdoor enthusiasts, leading to increased spending on accommodations, dining, retail, and recreational activities.
- *Job Creation:* Developing and maintaining trail networks requires labor, which creates employment opportunities in sectors such as trail construction, maintenance, guiding services, hospitality and retail.
- *Small Business Growth:* Trails spur development of small businesses catering to the needs of trail users such as outdoor outfitters, cafes, bed and breakfast and tour operators.
- *Property Values:* Properties located near well maintained trails often experience an increase in value due to their proximity to recreational amenities and scenic views.
- *Community Revitalization:* Trails may contribute to population growth and community vitality by attracting residents.
- *Healthcare Cost Reduction:* Access to outdoor recreation through trail networks promotes physical activity and active lifestyles, which can lead to improved public health.

Overall, trail networks in rural areas can stimulate economic growth, diversify local economies, and enhance the quality of life for residents, making them valuable assets for sustainable development and community well-being. The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of House Bill 530 – Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails – Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act).

HB 530 Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the

Uploaded by: Michelle Dietz

Position: FAV

Thursday, February 29, 2024

TO: Marc Korman, Chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, and Committee Members

FROM: Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, State Policy Manager

POSITION: Support HB 530 Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 530 offered by Delegate Boyce. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. We are dedicated to a future where people and nature thrive together.

HB 530 seeks to establish a new Maryland Office of Trails within the Department of Transportation to assist with developing and maintaining the state's vast trails network. Creating the Maryland Trails Network will establish better coordination between the agencies and entities working to maintain, develop and expand Maryland's trails system. The bill also creates a Maryland Trails Advisory Commission, which will have diverse membership from state agencies, various geographies in the state and interested parties, including representatives from cycling and pedestrian groups and disabled communities.

In Maryland, we are fortunate to have so many open and natural spaces from Western Maryland to our coastal communities. Inability to access to these natural areas can be a barrier for Marylanders and prevents spending time outdoors. Gaining access to outdoor spaces can provide significant physical and mental health benefits, such as stress recovery and improved well-being. Enhancing Maryland's trails system can increase access to natural areas, from rural to urban communities, and help to foster an interest in outdoor recreation. By expanding the trail systems that connect people to nature, the Office of Trails will not only support outdoor recreation's growth in the state, but we will see notable co-benefits to our communities, including tangible health benefits from recreation and time spent in nature and more equitable and affordable outdoor mobility across the state.

Outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking, and trail riding are important access points to nature for many residents, and also to provide substantial economic benefits. Maryland's outdoor recreation economy generates 109,000 direct jobs, \$14 billion in consumer spending, \$4.4 billion in wages and salaries, and \$951 million in state and local tax revenue. By allowing for mixed uses on the trails system, the system's development, growth, and maintenance will also enhance outdoor tourism opportunities. Expanding access to natural places across our state for recreation and conservation can raise Marylander's awareness and appreciation of nature and increases both the cultural and economic value of important places across our state.

TNC commends the Delegate Boyce for introducing this legislation that will invest in access to nature and outdoor recreation across Maryland for current and future generations.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 530.

2024-HB0530-Trails-FAV (3).pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Marks

Position: FAV



HB0530: The Great Maryland Trails Act
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing this testimony on behalf of Terps For Bike Lanes in support of HB 530. We believe that this bill is a cornerstone initiative that aligns with our organization's mission to enhance bicycle infrastructure and promote sustainable and inclusive transportation options in and around the University of Maryland. The establishment of a state office dedicated to overseeing the creation of a Statewide Trail Plan and promoting the planning and development of trails for both transportation and recreation is a crucial step towards fostering a more bike-friendly and accessible Maryland. The Great Maryland Trails Act mirrors a recommendation in the draft 2050 Maryland Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, emphasizing the importance of creating a trails team to serve as a liaison between stakeholders, enhance coordination, update the Statewide Trail Plan, and facilitate the execution of regional trail projects.

Drawing inspiration from successful models in other states that have implemented similar trails offices, this bill holds the promise of advancing trail development, coordinating local trail plans, securing additional federal funding, and significantly expanding Maryland's trails networks. As members of the Terps for Bike Lanes executive board, we recognize the potential of The Great Maryland Trails Act to create safer, more accessible, and interconnected trail systems that will benefit our community and the state at large. By supporting this legislation, Maryland has an opportunity to lead in sustainable transportation practices and reinforce its commitment to the well-being of its residents. We believe that The Great Maryland Trails Act is a keystone bill that can pave the way for a more environmentally conscious, active, and healthy future for our state.

Compiled research and case studies vividly demonstrate the multifaceted benefits of trails, underscoring their positive impact on both the environment and public health. The reports from

the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy shed light on the substantial environmental advantages, emphasizing reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, and decreased traffic congestion resulting from the implementation of trails. The American Forests' report further underscores the role of trails as green infrastructure in mitigating climate change, showcasing their ability to absorb carbon dioxide and alleviate the urban heat island effect. On the health front, the literature review published in the Journal of Physical Activity and Health establishes a strong connection between trail use and increased physical activity levels, improved mental health, and a lowered risk of chronic diseases.

Economic considerations also play a pivotal role, as highlighted by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's report on the economic impacts of trails. The findings reveal that trails not only generate tourism revenue but also create jobs and boost property values, contributing significantly to economic activity. We have sought to provide real-world examples of other successful trail initiatives, emphasizing key factors such as strong partnerships, dedicated funding, and a data-driven approach. We hope our endorsement will contribute to this bill's passage and help Maryland emerge as a national leader in environmental stewardship. We recognize that this is a challenging fiscal year and support amending the bill so that it aligns with the resource capacity of participating agencies, especially in MDOT, DNR, and MDP. We do not envision any transfer of positions but prefer collaboration among the agencies named in the bill. We urge a Favorable committee report on this legislation and encourage the House to pass it on the floor. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

President, Terps for Bike Lanes

terps4bikelanes@gmail.com

Support for Great Maryland Trails Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Owen Bailey

Position: FAV



Date: February 26, 2024

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 0530

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

The undersigned organizations support House Bill 0530 – Great Maryland Trails Act. This bill will establish the Maryland Office of Trails in the Department of Transportation to develop and maintain the Maryland Trails Network.

Trails bring many benefits to any community from public health, economic development, tourism, equitable active transportation, to access to parks, schools, and open space. In the updated Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans (2022) residents on the Eastern Shore and throughout the state ranked more and longer trails as their most valued recreational asset.

In the recently updated 2050 State Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, MDOT noted several areas of the Eastern Shore as lacking in pedestrian infrastructure and identified areas that would benefit from improved bicycle infrastructure. Maryland's Eastern Shore counties and municipalities often lack the staff resources needed to apply for and manage federal grants and many areas are not part of an MPO that could assist with these efforts. Neighboring Eastern Shore areas have recently received major federal awards for projects led by the state Departments of Transportation in Virginia (\$23 Million for Eastern Shore Rail Trail) and Delaware (\$21 Million for Georgetown to Lewes Trail).

A state office of trails focused on the development of regional trails projects would have positive impacts on the economy, community, and individual health and wellness.

An interconnected regional trail network would be a force multiplier as each trail system connected to the wider network would enjoy increased value. Trails encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles. They create safe alternative transportation and equitable access to jobs and daily needs. They expand greenspaces and wildlife corridors and can help preserve the rural character of our communities.

We respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 0530.

Sincerely,

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and the following organizations:

Catoctin Land Trust

David Lillard, Executive Director

Eastern Shore Trail Network Steering Committee

Owen Bailey, Chair

Forever Maryland

Josh Hastings, Executive Director

Talbot Thrive

Heather Grant, Executive Director

Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition

Patti Stevens, Co-Founder and Chair



2024-HB530-GreatMDTrailsAct-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Gray

Position: FAV



HB 530: Great Maryland Trails Act
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

February 29, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

Maryland has the potential to be a top-tier state in the nation with multi-use trails that support activities that contribute to our economy, environment, and quality of life. **HB 530, the Great Maryland Trails Act, will help ensure Maryland can fully leverage our progress, resources, and opportunity.**

A Maryland State Office of Trails will help achieve the State's vision, secure funding, ensure coordination, and maximize the beneficial impacts of trails to our economy, public health, transportation equity, and quality of life. **The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, supports the bill.**

Maryland needs coordination, strategic oversight, and increased investments in trails. Although Maryland has many exceptional and diverse trails, communities and advocates have identified a large backlog of maintenance projects and new trail projects that need attention. Current levels of local, state, federal, and private funding are insufficient to make Maryland a nationally recognized destination for trails. A trails office will facilitate increased funding, including through federal grants such as federal active transportation opportunities. Other states, including neighboring Virginia, plus Florida, Massachusetts, and Connecticut have established state trails.

The new trails and connected networks supported through the Great Maryland Trails Act will advance active transportation and recreation, leverage economic impacts, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and meet increasing demand from residents.

Investing in Maryland's multi-use trail networks and bicycling infrastructure makes economic sense. Maryland's outdoor recreation already generates \$14 billion in consumer spending and supports 109,000 jobs, more trails and support and expand these outcomes. Even when governments must make funding cuts, support for bicycling is not just another expenditure; it is a wise investment. According to a study from the University of Massachusetts, an average 11.4 jobs per million dollars spent are created with bicycle projects, compared to 7.8 jobs for road-only projects. More trail projects, increased access for trail users, and more options for outdoor recreation and active transportation will increase participation and returns for our state.

Amendment: We recognize that this is a challenging fiscal year and recommend amending the bill so that it aligns with the resource capacity of participating agencies, especially in MDOT, DNR and MDP. We do not envision any transfer of positions but prefer collaboration among the agencies named in the bill.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a Favorable HB 530 committee report and House floor vote with amendments.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Peter Gray, WABA Montgomery County Organizer
peter@waba.org

HB530_Boyce_FAV

Uploaded by: Regina Boyce

Position: FAV

REGINA T. BOYCE
Legislative District 43A
Baltimore City

—
Vice Chair
Environment and
Transportation Committee

Subcommittees
Housing and Real Property

Chair
Natural Resources, Agriculture
and Open Space



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 29, 2024

Good afternoon Chair Korman, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

For the record, I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce presenting **HB530 – Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)**.

HB530 establishes the Maryland Office of Trails (MOT) within the Department of Transportation. The purpose of this office is to develop and maintain the Maryland Trails Network, promote trail usage, create an inventory and database of trails, and collaborate with stakeholders to advance trail development and usage.

This bill aims to improve the network within the Department of Transportation and enhance safety through collaboration with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Similar initiatives have proven successful in other states, highlighting the importance and effectiveness of dedicated trail offices in promoting outdoor recreation, connectivity, and safety. Since 2013, 16 states (**Utah, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, North Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire**) have established Trail Offices to develop and implement sustainable, connected trail networks, ensuring citizen accessibility and safety.

I thank the Committee for their time and consideration for support of HB530.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina T. Boyce".

Regina T. Boyce

HB0530_DNR_SWA_ENT_2-29-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: FWA



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 29, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 530 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports the proposed legislation to create the “Maryland Office of Trails.” The Department is consistently engaged in a multifaceted approach to trail development across the Agency – including in several units such as the Maryland Park Service, Wildlife and Heritage Service, and the Maryland Forest Service. DNR manages trails for recreational purposes for numerous user groups including hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and off-highway vehicles. The Department also coordinates with neighboring communities and landowners to plan for and expand connections of our public lands to local communities and regional trails. This ongoing work will allow the Department to tap into pre-existing resources to support this effort. Additionally, the Department has the Office of Outdoor Recreation which oversees our efforts to expand, fund, and support outdoor recreation across the State including trail coordination and advancement.

The Department appreciates the intent of this legislation and the focus on trail development across the State. We also appreciate the intent of the legislation to bring together the variety of Agencies that support trail development and the stakeholders focused on our trails to ensure that necessary collaboration is happening.

The Department is currently engaging in conversations with the Senate and House sponsors to figure out how to make this legislation work for DNR and our sister Agencies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department manages over 500,000 acres of land across the State, including approximately 1,500 miles of trails for access and preservation of our Natural Resources. As referenced above, the Department does a variety of different trail focused work that includes in the Maryland Forest Service, the Maryland Park Service, and the Wildlife and Heritage Service. Additionally, the Office of Outdoor Recreation supports the Department expanding our efforts to provide outdoor recreation opportunities across Maryland.

BILL EXPLANATION

As drafted, this legislation creates the Maryland Office of Trails in the Department of Transportation to develop and maintain the Maryland Trails Network as well as several other responsibilities. Additionally, this legislation creates the Maryland Trails Advisory Commission to oversee the Office and provide necessary guidance around trail development in the State.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

Testimony Trails Commission.House.pages.pdf

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FWA



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

In the House Environment & Transportation Committee, February 29, 2024

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 530

Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

This is an ambitious bill that will change the entire landscape of trail development, maintenance and use in Maryland. Maryland's trails are very important to equestrians.

A recently released Economic Impact Study¹, commissioned by the American Horse Council in Washington, D.C., and conducted by the Innovation Group, found that almost 500,000 Maryland households contain at least one person who owns a horse and/or participates in equestrian activities; and that ten percent of Maryland's households contain at least one person who trail rides on horseback. In our own recent survey, respondents reported riding on over 50 public

¹ That study also found that Maryland's horse industry has grown by almost 40% since the last study was released in 2018. The overall economic impact of the horse industry today is \$2.9 billion, with the recreational sector such as trail riding contributing \$421 million.

trail systems spread throughout the State.² Many trails are multi-use, meaning that the same trail can be used by horses, bicycles and people on foot.

² Here are the public trails that our survey respondents reported riding their horses on:

Bohemia River State Park (Cecil County)
Cedarville State Forest (Prince George's County)
Chesapeake State (Lower Eastern Shore)
Doncaster Demonstration Forest (Charles County)
Elk Neck State Park (Cecil County)
Fair Hill NRMA (Cecil County)
Green Ridge State Forest (Allegany County)
Greenbriar State Park (Washington County)
Greenwell State Park (St. Mary's County)
Grove Farm WMA (Cecil County)
Gunpowder Falls State Park (Bunker Hill) (Baltimore County)
Gunpowder Falls State Park (Monkton) (Harford County)
Gunpowder Falls State Park (Sweet Air) (Balto & Harford)
Gunpowder Falls State Park (Torrey Brown) (Baltimore County)
Hashawa Loop Trail (Carroll County)
Idylwild Wildlife Management Area (Caroline County)
Indian Springs WMA (Washington County)
Liberty Reservoir Cooperative WMA (Balto & Carroll County)
Little Bennet Regional Park (Montgomery County)
Maxwell Hall Park (Charles County)
McKee-Beshears WMA (Montgomery County)
Merkle NRMA (PG County)
Monocacy NRMA (Montgomery County)
Morgan Run NEA (Carroll County)
Mrytle Grove WMA (Charles County)
Newtowne Neck State Park (St. Mary's County)
Patapsco Valley State Park (Avalon) (Baltimore City)
Patapsco Valley State Park (Cascade Falls) (Baltimore County)
Patapsco Valley State Park (McKeldin) (Howard County)
Patapsco Valley State Park (Orange Grove) (Howard County)
Patapsco Valley State Park (Rockburn Branch) (Howard County)
Patapsco Valley State Park (Sykesville) (Howard County)
Patapsco Valley State Park (River Road) (Howard County)
Patuxent River State Park – Jug Bay Natural Area (Prince George's County)
Patuxent River State Park (Annapolis Rock) (Howard County)
Pocomoke River State Park (Milburn Landing) (Worcester County)
Pocomoke State Forest (Furnace Town)
Prettyboy Reservoir Cooperative Wildlife Management Area (Baltimore County)
Rosaryville State Park (PG County)
Sassafras NRMA (Kent County)
Rocks State Park (Harford County)
Gambrill State Park (Frederick County)
Seneca Creek State Park (Montgomery County)
South Mountain State Park (Washington County)
Spring Valley County Park (Pennsylvania)
St. Mary's River State Park (St. Mary's County)

We note that although horse riding is acknowledged as one of multiple uses of trails (subsection 2-902(B)(4)(IV)), there is no other mention or inclusion of equestrian users in the bill.

Accordingly, we request that the bill be amended to recognize and include equestrian uses and users.

1. Specifically, in section 2-902(B)(2), add the Maryland Horse Industry Board, which licenses horse stables and which is charged with promoting equestrian activities and the use of horses for recreation, to the list of entities with which the Office of Trails will "COORDINATE . . . TO IDENTIFY OR ESTABLISH FUNDING SOURCES TO DEVELOP, CONSTRUCT, MAINTAIN, MANAGE, AND PROMOTE THE MARYLAND TRAILS NETWORK."

2. Similarly, we ask that in section 2-904(B)(1), which specifies the members of the Trails Advisory Commission, a seat be specifically designated for the Maryland Horse Council, and another seat be specifically designated for the Maryland Horse Industry Board. We note that both Bike Maryland and MORE have designated seats.

3. We also request that section 2-904(B)(1)(XXIII) be amended as follows:
UP TO SIX CITIZEN MEMBERS WHO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF BICYCLISTS, PEDESTRIANS, EQUESTRIANS AND THE DISABLED COMMUNITY . . .

As previously mentioned, on many trails different types of users share the trail simultaneously. The Horse Council in recent years has received a number of reports from our members regarding confusion about "trail etiquette." leading in some cases to potentially unsafe interactions with the various types of trail users. For example, trail bike users can be moving very fast and relatively silently with little to no advance warning to others. Horses are flight animals and can react dangerously to sudden noises and rapid movement. Walkers/hikers are unsure what to do when confronted by rapidly moving bikes or large horses. From our perspective, improved communication, signage, etc., could go a long way toward averting problems.

In addition, there have been instances where trail planning and installation has taken place without the equestrian community being "at the table," resulting, for example, in bridges over streams being designed and built in a way that is unsafe for mounted riders (insufficient side rails, slippery surfaces, etc.). Although in many cases Park staff have been accommodating when problems with completed projects are pointed out, obviously, it's not very efficient or beneficial to the taxpayer to have to reconfigure/repair projects, rather than to "smart design" them from the outset.

Although there have been conversations with Park managers about this, we believe that a codified, statewide approach would be helpful. This bill presents the perfect opportunity to address these issues.

Therefore, we suggest two additional amendments:

4. Add to section 2-904(l)(3), which authorizes the Commission to provide guidance to state agencies on several topics, a sub-subsection:

(3) PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS OF TRAIL-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND TRAIL SAFETY, INCLUDING

(l) Providing education and outreach to increase awareness of responsible use of trails, including appropriate and safe interaction between and among various users and user groups such hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders and others.

5. Add to section 2-902(B)(1):

THE OFFICE SHALL:

(1) DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN THE MARYLAND TRAILS PLAN TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, MANAGEMENT, USE, AND PROMOTION OF THE MARYLAND TRAILS NETWORK;

(l) When considering the development, construction, maintenance, management, use, and promotion of the Maryland Trails Network, the Office shall take into consideration equestrian use, and shall permit such use except as prohibited by law or regulation.

For the convenience of the Committee, in addition to this written testimony, we have also submitted a scan of certain pages of the bill, which are marked up to show the amendments we are requesting.

We urge the Committee to adopt these requested amendments and give HB 530 a Favorable with Amendments report.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)

info@mdhorsecouncil.org

Trails Commission markup.pdf

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FWA

1 2-902.

2 (A) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND OFFICE OF TRAILS IN THE DEPARTMENT.

3 (2) THE PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE OFFICE SHALL BE WITHIN THE
4 DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS.

5 (B) THE OFFICE SHALL:

6 (1) DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN THE MARYLAND TRAILS PLAN TO
7 FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, MANAGEMENT,
8 USE, AND PROMOTION OF THE MARYLAND TRAILS NETWORK;

9 (2) COORDINATE WITH THE FOLLOWING PERSONS TO IDENTIFY OR
10 ESTABLISH FUNDING SOURCES TO DEVELOP, CONSTRUCT, MAINTAIN, MANAGE, AND
11 PROMOTE THE MARYLAND TRAILS NETWORK:

12 (I) THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE;

13 (II) THE DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES;

14 (III) THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION;

15 (IV) THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT;

16 (V) THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH;

17 (VI) THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING;

18 (VII) THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES;

19 (VIII) THE MARYLAND STATE POLICE;

20 (IX) THE OFFICE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT;

21 (X) RELEVANT FEDERAL AGENCIES;

22 (XI) LOCAL GOVERNMENTS;

23 (XII) THE DIRECTOR OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS;

24 (XIII) RELEVANT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS;

25 AND

(1) When considering the development, construction, maintenance, management, use, and promotion of the Maryland Trails Network, the Office shall take into consideration equestrian use, and shall permit such use except as prohibited by law or regulation.

1 (IV) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT
2 OF HEALTH;

3 (V) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
4 PLANNING;

5 (VI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
6 RESOURCES;

7 (VII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
8 TRANSPORTATION;

→ ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND HORSE INDUSTRY BOARD

9 (VIII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OFFICE OF TOURISM
10 DEVELOPMENT;

11 (IX) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL
12 CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION;

13 (X) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A METROPOLITAN PLANNING
14 ORGANIZATION;

15 (XI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A RURAL REGIONAL PLANNING
16 COUNCIL FOR AN AREA THAT IS NOT PART OF A METROPOLITAN PLANNING
17 ORGANIZATION;

18 (XII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION
19 OF COUNTIES;

20 (XIII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL
21 LEAGUE;

(XIV) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF BIKE MARYLAND;

23 (XV) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF MID-ATLANTIC OFF-ROAD
24 ENTHUSIASTS;

→ ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

(XVI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A REGIONAL TRAIL COALITION;

26 (XVII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A TRAIL ADVOCACY
27 ORGANIZATION;

(XVIII) ONE CITIZEN MEMBER FROM THE EASTERN SHORE;

1 (XIX) ONE CITIZEN MEMBER FROM WESTERN MARYLAND;

2 (XX) ONE CITIZEN MEMBER FROM SOUTHERN MARYLAND;

3 (XXI) TWO CITIZEN MEMBERS FROM THE BALTIMORE
4 METROPOLITAN AREA;

5 (XXII) TWO CITIZEN MEMBERS FROM THE WASHINGTON
6 METROPOLITAN AREA; AND

7 (XXIII) UP TO SIX CITIZEN MEMBERS WHO REPRESENT THE
8 INTERESTS OF BICYCLISTS, PEDESTRIANS, AND THE DISABLED COMMUNITY,
9 INCLUDING: ^{↑ EQUESTRIANS}

10 1. ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE
11 VISUALLY IMPAIRED; AND

12 2. ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE
13 MOBILITY IMPAIRED.

14 (2) ONE OF THE CITIZEN MEMBERS APPOINTED UNDER PARAGRAPH
15 (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL HAVE EXPERTISE IN BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN
16 SAFETY.

17 (3) THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION MAY NOT EXCEED
18 30 MEMBERS.

19 (C) THE GOVERNOR SHALL DESIGNATE THE CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION.

20 (D) (1) THE TERM OF A MEMBER IS 4 YEARS.

21 (2) THE TERMS OF MEMBERS ARE STAGGERED.

22 (3) AT THE END OF A TERM, A MEMBER CONTINUES TO SERVE UNTIL
23 A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED AND QUALIFIES.

24 (4) A MEMBER WHO IS APPOINTED AFTER A TERM HAS BEGUN SHALL
25 SERVE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM OR UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED
26 AND QUALIFIES.

27 (E) THE COMMISSION MAY ADOPT PROCEDURES NECESSARY TO ENSURE
28 THE ORDERLY TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS.

1 (F) THE COMMISSION SHALL HOLD REGULAR MEETINGS AS IT CONSIDERS
2 APPROPRIATE.

3 (G) A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION:

4 (1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE
5 COMMISSION; BUT

6 (2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE
7 STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

8 (H) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL COORDINATE WITH THE FOLLOWING
9 ENTITIES TO PROVIDE STAFF, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, AND OPERATING
10 EXPENSES FOR THE COMMISSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET:

11 (1) THE OFFICE;

12 (2) THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE;

13 (3) THE DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES;

14 (4) THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT;

15 (5) THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH;

16 (6) THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING; AND

17 (7) THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

18 (I) THE COMMISSION SHALL PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO STATE AGENCIES
19 REGARDING:

20 (1) THE FUNDING OF TRAIL-RELATED PROGRAMS;

21 (2) THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE MARYLAND
22 TRAILS PLAN;

23 (3) PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS OF TRAIL-RELATED
24 ACTIVITIES AND TRAIL SAFETY, INCLUDING;

25 (4) POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES NECESSARY FOR TRAIL
26 DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE; AND

(l) Providing education and outreach to increase awareness of responsible use of trails, including appropriate and safe interaction between and among various users and user groups such as hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders and others.

2024-HB530-GreatMDTrailsAct-CTC-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kalli Krumpos

Position: FWA



HB 530: Great Maryland Trails Act
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Capital Trails Coalition - Favorable

February 29, 2024

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Capital Trails Coalition was founded by the National Park Service (NPS), Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and Washington Area Bicyclist Association nearly a decade ago to bring together the broad, diverse set of decision-makers, stakeholders, and agency officials who are responsible for our region's trail system. The CTC's goal is to coordinate, communicate and collaborate as a singular entity advocating for the completion of a network of more than 1,000 miles of trails across Prince George's and Montgomery Counties in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia.

Today, the Coalition is made up of more than 80 member organizations¹, including government agencies, businesses, and community groups working on realizing this vision of an equitable, connected, and low-stress multi-use trail network that will transform public life by providing access to open space and reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

HB 530, the Great Maryland Trails Act, would:

- Advance trails for transportation, recreation, and tourism,
- Increase collaboration across jurisdictions and to better create a state-wide network,
- Facilitate more federal funding for Maryland's trail-development and building efforts, and
- Support local jurisdiction's planning, design, and construction efforts.

Maryland has the potential to be a top-tier state in the nation with multi-use trails for walking, biking, running, rolling, scooting, and more, that support activities that contribute to our economy, environment, and quality of life. However, we need coordination, strategic oversight, and increased investments in trails. Although we have many exceptional and diverse trails, communities and advocates have identified a large backlog of maintenance projects and new trail projects that need attention. Other states, including neighboring Virginia, plus Florida, Massachusetts, and Connecticut have established state trails offices.

Despite the potential beneficial impacts of completing trails across the state, the current levels of local, state, federal, and private funding are insufficient to make Maryland a nationally recognized destination for trails. A trails office will facilitate increased funding, including through federal grants such as federal active transportation opportunities.

¹Government agencies and other organizational members, including members of the Steering Committee, serve as Advisory Members. Advisory members do not advocate or participate in advocacy efforts, and recuse themselves from any decision in which there is a conflict of interest.



The Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan update calls for a vision to provide safe and convenient active transportation that supports equitable access for all. The new trails and connected networks supported through the Great Maryland Trails Act will advance active transportation and recreation, leverage economic impacts, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and meet increasing demand from residents.

Amendment: We recognize that this is a challenging fiscal year and recommend amending the bill so that it aligns with the resource capacity of participating agencies, especially in MDOT, DNR and MDP. We do not envision any transfer of positions but prefer collaboration among the agencies named in the bill.

As staff to the Capital Trails Coalition, I support a Favorable HB 530 committee report and House floor vote with amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Kalli Krumpos | Trails Coalition Manager

HB 530.DD Council.Support With Amendments.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FWA



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Environment and Transportation Committee

**HB 530: Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment
(Great Maryland Trails Act)**

February 29, 2024

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together.

The Council supports HB 530 with the following amendments to ensure the terms used to identify people with disabilities reflect preferences from the disability community:

- Replacing “DISABLED” with “DISABILITY” on page 9, line 8
- Replacing “REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED” with “PERSON WITH A VISUAL DISABILITY” on page 9, line 10-11
- Replacing “REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MOBILITY IMPAIRED” with “PERSON WITH A MOBILITY DISABILITY” on page 9, line 12-13

WHAT does this legislation do?

- This bill establishes the Maryland Office of Trails as a new office under the Department of Transportation. The bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to identify employees that will transfer to the Maryland Office of Trails.
- The Maryland Office of Trails will be responsible for developing and maintaining the Maryland Trail Network with the goal of expanding the use of trails in Maryland. The office will establish the Maryland Trails Advisory Commission and work with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

WHY is this legislation important?

- **People with disabilities want and need access to inclusive recreation.** The Council collaborated with the Maryland Department of Disabilities to create a framework to support inclusive playgrounds across the state¹. By including the Department of Disabilities as a member of the Maryland Trails Advisory Commission, the Maryland Office of Trails can ensure their work also promotes inclusive recreation so all Marylanders can use trails.
- **Inclusive recreation creates opportunities for healthy living for people with disabilities.** People with disabilities have higher rates of most chronic diseases, such as heart disease, asthma, and diabetes, compared to people without disabilities². By growing the network of inclusive trails in Maryland, the Maryland Office of Trails creates more opportunities for people with disabilities to live the lives they want which includes exercise and time outside.

HB 530 creates more opportunities for all Marylanders to play together. For these reasons, the Council supports HB 530.

Contact: Dr. Stephanie Dolamore, Deputy Director, SDolamore@md-council.org

¹www.md-council.org/inclusiveplayground-framework

² <https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/adf76d09aef54240b4eb449ce6111b96/parksforinclusion-disability.pdf>

HB0530.pdf

Uploaded by: Suzanne Duffy

Position: UNF

HB0530 is more Agenda21 insanity. SAY NO.

Suzanne Price
AACo, MD

HB 530 MDP Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Wilson

Position: INFO



Maryland DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

HEARING DATE: February 29, 2024
BILL NO: HB0530
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation Committee
POSITION: Letter of Information
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 366-4224

TITLE: Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)

BILL ANALYSIS:

The bill would establish the Maryland Office of Trails (the Office) in MDOT to develop and maintain a designated trail system—the Maryland Trails Network—for transportation, recreational, economic, tourism, and environmental purposes. The bill would set forth the Office’s functions, roles, and responsibilities, which would include: advancing the development, maintenance, and use of trails in the state; developing an inventory and database; and collecting information regarding trails. The bill would require MDP and other state agencies, local governments, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to work with the Office to identify or establish funding sources for trail development, maintenance and promotion. Also, the Office would be authorized to develop a program to recognize and promote trail towns (communities located close to long-distance non-motorized recreation trails) in the state.

In support of the proposed Office, the bill would create the Maryland Trails Advisory Commission (Commission), which would include the MDP as a member. The Commission would appoint a Director of the Office and provide guidance to state agencies to fund trail programs, develop and implement the Maryland Trails Plan, and support other trails-related policies and regulations. In its current language, the bill would require MDOT to coordinate with MDP and other agencies to provide staff, administrative support, and operating expenses for the Commission in accordance with the state budget.

Lastly, the bill’s current language requires DNR and MDP to transfer employees to the Office as part of the staffing for the Office. The bill indicates that staff for the Office shall have expertise in trail planning and development, mapping and GIS software, and state and local land use and zoning laws and regulations.

MDP provides policy and technical advice on state, regional and local transportation planning and investment decisions to ensure consistency with the Maryland Planning Visions and the Priority Funding Areas Act. The Planning Visions call for growing smarter and more sustainably and making efficient use of State resources through a more collaborative and informed public process. Among them, the transportation vision promotes multimodal transportation that facilitates “the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.” Improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities including trails in communities throughout the State will enhance the safety and connectivity of walking, biking, and other active transportation, improve walkability, and foster placemaking in Maryland, which are consistent with the State’s Planning Visions.

In coordination with MDOT, MPOs, local jurisdictions, and other state and federal agencies, MDP is currently involved in the local comprehensive plan and local, state, and regional transportation plan, program, and project planning and development processes, through which MDP advocates for improving Maryland's range of access and mobility options and sound transportation and land use strategies in these plans, programs, and projects. MDP also actively participates in various MPO's and State transportation committees and workgroups including the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Through these intergovernmental coordination efforts, MDP supports the planning and development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities including trails in communities throughout the State and promotes placemaking where walking, biking, and active transportation can be a viable transportation mode.

MDP seeks opportunities to support the development of state plans and planning tools for pedestrian, bicycle, and trail planning and utilizes them to support various planning functions. MDP notes the following existing plans, information and committees related to trail planning and development developed and supported by MDOT:

1. 2050 Maryland Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
2. Maryland Trails Plan (2009)
3. Maryland State Bicycle Map (2017)
4. Statewide bicycle trail GIS database
5. Maryland's Road-Separated Bike Routes
6. Maryland's Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress Map
7. MDOT Bicycle Accessibility Map
8. Maryland Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

MDP anticipates it would need to identify additional resources to support the tasks included in the bill. These resources would be needed to support the following MDP work:

1. Implementing trail planning and development activities, in coordination with other state agencies and local governments.
2. Ensuring successful coordination between MDP's regional planning and transportation staff and local planning departments and MPOs.
3. Gathering, organizing, and coordinating the provision of socioeconomic, zoning and land use data and analyses, and mapping needed to support the preparation and promotion of the Maryland Trails Plan and Maryland Trails Network.

Overall, MDP estimates that two replacement staff and one new additional planner will be needed to perform the work required in this bill, without significantly depleting MDP of its transportation planning staff. It should be noted that in the past twenty years, MDP's Baltimore planning office has had over a 40% reduction in staffing, the cumulative impact of this and other planning legislation make it extremely difficult to continue to provide the needed level of planning support and analysis to state agencies and local governments without additional staffing. The fiscal impact to the department to perform the work associated with this bill are estimated to cost \$274,370 in FY 25 and \$330,312 in FY 26.

It should also be noted that MDP, DNR, and MDOT have been in communication with the Offices of Senator Elfreth and Delegate Boyce on this bill, and it is to our understanding that the sections where MDP and DNR are to transfer staff and where MDP, among other agencies, have to share operating expenses were not meant to be in the bill and amendments will be introduced to change that language. Additionally, DNR will be proposing a list of amendments that were shared with MDP ahead of the hearing and that MDP is supportive of, which includes 1) moving the proposed Office of Trails from MDOT to DNR's Office of Outdoor Recreation, and 2) striking the "Maryland Trails Commission" from the bill and shifting its responsibilities to what would be the newly renamed DNR Parks, Recreation, and Trails Commission. If the amendments that the Offices of Senator Elfreth and Delegate Boyce discussed and that DNR are proposing are adopted, then the fiscal impact on MDP will drop significantly.

HB 530 - E&T - MDH - LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: INFO



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 530 Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act) - Letter of Information

Dear Chairman Korman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 530 - Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act). HB 530 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. HB 530 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

HB0530 - TSO - Maryland Trails Advisory Commission

Uploaded by: Pilar Helm

Position: INFO

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 530 – Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails – Establishment (Gret Maryland Trails Act)

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on House Bill 530 for the Committee’s Consideration.

House Bill 530 seeks to establish a Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails within MDOT to improve access to trails across Maryland. The bill further requires certain staffing to the Maryland Office of Trails and assigns specific tasks to the Office and Committee.

The MDOT currently supports the goals of House Bill 530 by providing resources for the development of trails across the State. MDOT has already completed some of the bill’s provisions, while outstanding requirements are recommended in the recently completed 2050 Maryland Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP). House Bill 530 and the BPMP both support updating the statewide trail plan of regionally significant trails and creating a “Trails Team” of multi-agency staff who currently address trail issues. MDOT is drafting a scope of work for the state trails plan and beginning to organize staff from several state agencies to convene the ‘trails team.’

The MDOT Office of Active Transportation and Micromobility (OATM) maintains a database of trails open to two-way bicycle traffic, which is both a key provision in the bill and the foundation for trails planning across the state. The OATM staff coordinate regularly with colleagues at the State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to advance trail and shared-use paths development. Other MDOT staff are also assigned to manage grant opportunities for all manner of transportation projects, including trail projects. MDOT supports trail development by local jurisdictions and metropolitan planning organizations which are eligible for federal programs such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TA), Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATTIIP), the Emissions Reductions Program and the Reconnecting Communities Program.

The MDOT is the agency assigned to staff the MBPAC, a legislatively mandated committee to address bicycle, pedestrian and micromobility safety and access across the state. The Director of the Office of Active Transportation and Micromobility holds a seat on the MBPAC representing the Maryland Department of Transportation along with 21 other interagency and citizen members to advise the State in bicycle, pedestrian, and micromobility program areas.

The Honorable Marc Korman
Page Two

The MBPAC includes most of the members recommended in House Bill 530 and meets quarterly to discuss trail and shared-use path access and issues. Subcommittees, or working groups, are permitted to help advance work of the full MBPAC but are subject to full Open Meetings Act requirements if given official standing. The formation of ad-hoc committees on a volunteer basis is another opportunity to advance the Committee's needs and interests. These ad-hoc committees may include stakeholders outside of the formal MBPAC membership. MBPAC has considered voting to form a Trails Subcommittee which would support requirements of House Bill 530.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 530.

Respectfully submitted,

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