

February 1, 2025

The Department of Legislative Services
General Assembly of Maryland

RE: HoCo 5-25: Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland
– Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the HoCo 5-25: Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment bill.

Go to the State Wildlands Area at Patuxent on a Spring Day. Feel the fresh soft breeze on your face. Watch the patterns of sunlight filter through the trees and throw a patchwork of brilliance upon the forest floor, illuminating each leaf, or outlining the unique textures of bark on a nearby tree trunk. Breathed deep and become, for just a moment, part of this forest.

It has been said that God, or whatever deity you choose to worship, speaks to us through nature. If this is the case, then the wildlands at the Patuxent River State Park Annapolis Rock area provide a cathedral for those who choose to venture into their wooded bliss.

While keeping the wildlands pure, but shielding them from any mechanizations, is a noble endeavor, there comes a time when those regulations become counterproductive to the enjoyment of this lush property.

Once huge trees come down or invasive species such as multiflora rose choke out the trails, then no one can enjoy this precious and natural asset.

What's worse, if someone should become injured deep in the thicket, it might be near impossible for emergency crews to rescue him or her!

Such impediments will deter people from venturing into those areas. If no one can get out there, how long does it take before the public ceases to care for them? How long does it take for those precious resources to eventually lose the allocated funding needed to keep them protected?

There are volunteers who are willing to do the work, who want to preserve this precious asset, but the regulation against motorized equipment and the lack of a separate path for emergency responders has made this effort nearly impossible.

I have gone out into the wilderness areas and enjoyed it, even while I spent hours clipping away the invasive rose, branches, etc. by hand. DNR has limited resources as well to keep this natural resource property maintained for the enjoyment of those who wish to use it. Volunteers play a vital role.

I believe this bill will untie their hands and give them, as well as their volunteers, the power to do the job they wish to do, while providing the balance needed to keep the wilderness lands pristine as well as safe and negotiable for the public who wishes to enjoy it.

For the sake of this local marvel, the people who are its stewards and the public who wishes to enjoy it, please pass Ho. Co. 5-25 without hesitation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Z. Bourdeaux".

Sandra Z. Bourdeaux
Howard County Resident
Secretary, Trail Riders of Today (TROT)
Equestrian Trail User & Volunteer
Concerned Citizen
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