

DATE: February 28, 2025

FROM: Carey McIntosh, Life Member & Former Fire Chief, Lisbon Volunteer Fire Company

TO: Maryland Senate EEE Committee

RE: SB 968 Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland

POSITION: Favorable

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing to urge you to pass SB 968.

Although the Patuxent Wildlands span Howard and Montgomery Counties, the primary access into the Wildlands is from the Howard County side of the Patuxent River. The Howard County side is where the parking is located for all users of the Wildlands. As such, the Lisbon Volunteer Fire Company serves as the Patuxent Wildlands primary first responders.

In almost thirty-five years as a first responder I have been on many *many* incidents in the Park, including but not limited to:

- the injured hunter from a fall;
- the accidental shooting of a hunter by another hunter;
- the hunter who started to have chest pain from hiking into the trails;
- the injured hiker with the ankle injury that couldn't walk out on his own;
- the hiker that was in the park for most of the day that didn't prepare for the extended time when he got lost and dehydrated;
- the rider thrown from her horse.

The list goes on.

Because of deadfall and the prohibition against the use of mechanized equipment to keep emergency access trails open, first responders can only access these critical patients on foot, and then as gently as possible carry the patients out, often having to precariously lift them over downed trees, with sprawling branches that make it impossible to go around the obstacle.

Patients that needed immediate care spent hours in the park before being located and removed to awaiting ambulances or medivac units.

Frankly, it is not uncommon for the first responders to carry in chain saws ourselves, but that still steals precious time from the patient.

We have offered to work with DNR, but to the best of my knowledge, they have never responded to us.

It is our understanding that DNR did some clearing of emergency access trails this past October, but again (to the best of my knowledge) they never reached out to us to determine the crucial trail heads needed for first responders.

If there was a provision for regular management of those obstacles it would greatly reduce the time in and out of the park ultimately providing a more positive outcome for the next park goer that find themselves in an unfortunate situation.

Sincerely,

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