
Testimony for Ho.Co. 5-25

Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

By: Senator Hester

27 January 2025

Dante, Paso Fino Horse

Highland, MD 20777

Loves Patuxent River State Park Wildland Area

Courtney Frye, Owner, FPVSP, Hiker

Glen Burnie, MD 21061

502-523-1580

boardmember06@trot-md.org

courtneyfrye31@gmail.com

To whom it my concern,

I'm writing to implore you to vote the Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment bill Ho.Co. 5-25 through to the 2025 General Assembly session.

When I arrived in Maryland 10 years ago with my horse Dante I was introduced to Patuxent River State Park by fellow equestrians and have been riding there ever since. Up until 2020 the wildland trails of the park were very well maintained and were open enough to provide safe passage in case of an emergency. But now have seen a steady decline as the multiflora rose takes over.

Myself, along with volunteers from TROT (Trail riders of Today) and the Iron Bridge Hunt Club tried desperately last year to go in with hand tools and horsepower to reclaim these beautiful trails that criss crossing the Patuxent River. However, some downed trees are just too large for a horse to drag out of the way without chainsaw intervention. Plus, the multiflora rose grows faster than hand tools can keep up with.

Allowing the use of electric trimmers, bushhogs and chainsaws (chainsaw certification required of course with DNR) would really allow the Patuxent River Wildland community users to help DNR with keeping the trails open for safety purposes.

Please elect to send this bill to the general assembly so that this beloved part of the park can continue to be used by the county's constituents and discovered by other nature lovers from all over.

Sincerely,

Courtney Frye

Trail Riders of Today (TROT) Editor in Chief

I am writing in support of this bill. Although I live in Anne Arundel County, I frequently horseback ride on the trails in Howard County. I'm also a member of Trail Riders of Today (TROT), an organization that provides volunteers to help maintain trails on public lands. Allowing motorized vehicles and equipment would make trail maintenance so much easier. I'm not asking for you to allow ATVs to access the trails for recreation all the time. Just allow motorized equipment for legitimate trail clearing and maintenance. For example, when a giant tree comes down and blocks the path, you need a chain saw to clear it. Another riding club I belonged to in the past brought in rubber mats for better traction on wooden bridges. They couldn't have done that without allowing utility vehicles to haul the mats in and out of the park. This is a no-brainer. Please consider voting for this bill.

With appreciation,
Angela Rary

January 31, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Senator Clarence Lam
Chairs, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 – Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland –
Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment**

Dear Chairman Wu, Chairman Lam, and Members of the Howard County Delegation,

I am writing to express my support for Ho.Co. 5-25. Senator Hester has been extremely helpful in assisting myself and others in our attempt to prevent the continued loss of use of trails in the beautiful community park within the Patuxent River Wildland, Annapolis Rock. This trail system has for many years been a source of joy for outdoor enthusiasts such as myself whether we are riding horses, hiking, walking our dogs, trail running, birding, or the occasional mountain biker.

These trails have been in steady decline due to the inability of DNR and volunteers, myself included, to use any mechanized equipment such as weed whackers, chainsaws, or a bush hog to clear the numerous downed trees and extreme overgrowth of invasive species such as multiflora rose and numerous vines that ultimately kill the trees they grow on. Mr. Peditto, the DNR Assistant Secretary Land Resources I have also been communicating with, advised me he had to go through the Attorney General in order to get permission to use equipment to clear the trails this past summer. This proved to be a very lengthy process.

A group of fellow volunteers and I put in dozens of hours all year long armed with handsaws, loppers, and pruning shears on an attempt to keep ahead of mother nature, but it is a daunting, time consuming, and an especially painful task as we are shredded by thorns copiously provided by the invasive multiflora rose bush that has gone unchecked. The handsaws are only but so effective given the size of some of the trees and branches that have fallen. Not maintaining the existing trails forces park goers off the main trails to get around fallen trees or to turn around because they cannot get through the dense thorny thicket at all. Worse, some in the community have become so discouraged by the condition of the trails that they go to better maintained parks in nearby counties. Some of the trails have become completely impassable.

Another concern is for emergency response. Emergency responders would have a very difficult time reaching an injured person with the trails in the condition they have been in the last three to four years. Their inability to reach someone could have a devastating effect on the person they are trying to reach.

I understand that DNR has an enormous responsibility trying to maintain all the parks in Maryland and their resources are stretched thin. I understand that the Wildlands designations is to provide an opportunity to experience nature in a wilderness state, but if the community cannot access the trails because they are blocked by invasive and profuse multiflora rose overgrowth or cannot navigate around fallen trees, it defeats the purpose of the existence of the park. You cannot experience what you cannot get to. The club I ride with had been clearing these trails in the past with direction from DNR per a user agreement we have in place. We were told we had to stop several years ago as the "no motorized equipment" was now being enforced. There are volunteers in this community that love this park, that want to use this park on a weekly basis, and desperately want to be an ongoing part of the solution. I have personally paid my farm employees to help me clear these trails and will continue to do so in order to keep the trails open. Several other volunteers have been certified in the past by DNR to use chainsaws. There are many of us with the ability to use a weed whacker. If permitted, we can provide, with direction from DNR, ongoing maintenance to all the existing trails (instead of just a few) in a much more efficient manner with these tools and in a fraction of the time it takes us now. I would personally be happy to be a liaison with a ranger and work out a plan for volunteers via a user agreement as we have done in the past.

I believe that the restoration of the current trails will help preserve the surrounding woodlands, bring it back to being the wonderful asset to the community that they have been in the past, create a safer environment for all who enjoy the trails, and give those of us willing to do the work a chance to give back to the community we so love.

Sincerely,

Ann Moxley
West Friendship, MD

We are in support of Ho Co Bill 5-25 to allow motorized vehicles and equipment at the Patuxent River State Park Annapolis Rock area to clear the trails. The trails are currently a mess due to years of neglect and numerous storms that have created a large amount of dead fall. The amount of dead fall is too great and too large to practically be removed by hand tools, and in addition is a safety hazard. The clearing of the trails would be of great benefit to all who use the park (hikers and equestrians). It would be a shame to let this recreational resource to further decline.

*Sharon, Dan, and Emily Benz
1537 Old Annapolis Road
Woodbine, MD 21797*

January 27th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park to _horseback ride in the woods. It's very pretty and relaxing._____.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because _the undergrowth and stickers are getting so thick some trails that my face is slashed and my horse gets cuts. It is easy to get lost if the trails are hard to see._____.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Cathy and Greg Noell
Mount Airy MD

January 29th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park to: trail ride my horse, hike with my dogs, participate in group horseback events. Enjoy the outdoors_____.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because the trails become overgrown and impassible in many areas, this causes trails to become unrecognizable and park users enter areas that are not trails. This is dangerous and also not healthy for the park trail system.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Christine Aitken

Windsor Mill, MD

January 27th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park to _trail ride on my horse_____.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because I want to continue to be able to enjoy the trails to hike and or ride my horse._____.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Loverde
Catonsville, MD 21228

January 27th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

Unlike many of the bills you will hear today, Ho.Co. 5-25 does not ask for additional funding or resources. Instead, it asks that you allow the community to help maintain the park that we enjoy on a daily basis. Whether it's horseback riding, hiking, search and rescue practice, or bird watching, the Patuxent River Wildland is an invaluable asset in Howard County that is in desperate need of trail maintenance.

Maryland's rich equestrian history is always on full display at the park, with riders of all disciplines enjoying the trails with their family and loved ones. For myself, Patuxent has been a sanctuary of tranquility and family bonding as my parents and I took the trails every weekend with our horses to reflect on the week's events from the back of the saddle. With the loss of my mother this past May, it has been a source of comfort and refuge for my father and I to navigate the same trails we once shared with Mom and honor her legacy as an accomplished equestrian and environmentalist.

But in the past few years, the law has prevented us from maintaining the trails we love with modern equipment, forcing us at times to drive to parks farther away in Montgomery and Carroll counties due to storm damage that has completely barricaded Patuxent's trails. In attempts to navigate around blocked trails, we have run into bees, become tangled in vines, and cut up by thorns.

The preservation of the park's trails means preserving a natural resource that the community shares. It ensures that everyone in the area can safely enjoy nature from the ground, a horse, or a bike. When trails are passable, the woods surrounding them can

remain untouched and the need to trailblaze off the path is eliminated. Given the volatile summer storms we've experienced in the past, it is impossible to only maintain these trails with hand tools. Massive trees have come down that require motorized equipment to clear and the community stands ready to do this labor of love for our park.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25 and give residents that right to invest in their community.

Sincerely,

Emily Witty
Woodbine, MD

February 3, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park for horseback riding and organized mounted fox Chasing.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because it is a matter of safety. In the event of an injury emergency vehicles need to be capable to respond.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

George F. Hughes
2420 Mullinix Mill Road
Mount Airy, MD 21771

443 952-0537

February 3rd, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park to hike and run the trails.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because the overgrown vegetation impedes on the paths, making them difficult to navigate and obstructs sightlines.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Grant Smith
Mt. Airy, MD

February 3, 2025

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.

While our young people and sadly many, many adults spend their lives staring into, and fiddling with their phones, our outdoor spaces become overgrown, unattractive, and impassible. Human health requires (demands!) a connection with nature.

The trails on our public lands must be accessible in order for our residents to be able to safely use them, and to foster their appreciation for our natural spaces. Requiring volunteers to use 18th century methods to maintain the public's access to nature and the wilderness trail areas (that their tax money helps to maintain and protect) is altogether unrealistic. Volunteers, by their nature, are those who care most about these areas. They would prefer support, and possibly some training, instead of regulations that hamper their ability to care for our open spaces. Having the ability to cut out a section of a large fallen tree across an existing trail helps maintain that trail, while not creating other “user-defined,” trails. These work-around trails increase erosion and disruption of any trail system, and the surrounding environment.

I understand that our government agencies are dealing with budget constraints and lack the human resources to care for our parks and trails in the way they would like. Please give those who want to care for and maintain access to our natural spaces the tools to effectively do that.

Please pass Ho. Co. 5–25 so we can more safely and effectively access our most healthy recreational activities.

“In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, —no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thomas D. Bourdeaux, Jr.
Howard County Resident
Artist & Photographer
Equestrian Trail Rider & Volunteer
Concerned Citizen

Dear Representative Hestor and fellow representatives,

I am writing to express my strong endorsement of HO Co bill 5-25. I acknowledge the significance of preserving our natural resources, but I believe this amendment permits the maintenance of areas that have been utilized by the community for years without adverse effects, and will improve safety.

Yours truly,

Jessica Conaway

To: Members of the General Assembly,

I am definitely for the Bill Ho.Co.5-25.

I have enjoyed trail riding and fox hunting in Patuxent State Park at Annapolis Rock since 1989.

It is a wonderful park (with terrific parking) and one of the last large areas to trail ride in Howard County due to development.

The last couple of years have been a challenge for equestrians, hikers and birders to get around

In this park. So much deadfall and multiflora rose around which to have to navigate; which provides the perfect areas for ground bees. Some of the downfall (uprooted trees) require powered equipment to clear the trails.

I think it is really important for emergency personnel to have unencumbered trails to reach anyone who has fallen, had a cardiac episode or allergic reaction to bees.

The park will still be a wilderness...just a safer one.

Thank you for your attention. Thank you Senator Hester.

Regards,

Joanne Mumma

Kathryn G. Leef
18950 WINDSOR FOREST ROAD
MOUNT AIRY, MARYLAND

February 3, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu Chair

Howard County Delegation House Office Building

6 Bladen Street Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland –
Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation:

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland. I use the park to hike, hunt, fish and ride horses.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park trails for access, especially emergency access for first responders. There have been many instances when emergency personnel have had difficulty accessing the park for rescue operations. The local fire department, Lisbon Volunteer Fire Co., has a specific RTV rescue vehicle that they cannot utilize unless the trail system is maintained.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Kathryn G. Leef

Howard County Resident

The ability to use motorized vehicles for clearing the trails in the Annapolis Rock area of the Patuxent state park has been needed for many years.

Large trees come down frequently blocking trails often with no way around them. Multi flower rose and green briar can also grow over trails making them impassable for anyone on foot, or on horseback.

The only relief comes when the fox hunters clear in the fall.

In addition to the inconvenience

not keeping the trails open there is a danger of accidents that may occur when people try to get around these obstacles.

When bad accidents occur it would take rescue workers way too long to get to the people in need.

Please pass this bill!

January 31, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21402

Re: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 - Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation,

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

My interest in maintaining the trails is to be able to ride horses and hike along trails that have been cleared of brush, thorn bushes, and fallen trees. In order to do this, it is important to allow motorized equipment to access the various trails and bring in the necessary tools to do the clearing. This clearing would enhance the trails for the enjoyment of the greater Howard County community.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho. Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Louise Steinfort
11922 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

To whom it may concern,

I write in favor of Bill Ho. Co. 5–25. As somebody who regularly uses trails affected by this bill, it's clear that they need regular upkeep. Some of that can and should be done on foot with hand tools, but every weather event brings down trees. In the 21st century there are far more efficient ways to move logs off the trail than with a hand saw.

Permitting volunteers to use appropriate tools to keep the trails open is a zero cost way of meeting many goals. It allows more people to enjoy the county's wild areas, and keeps trails open enough for fire or rescue personnel to be able to use them in an emergency.

Thank you for considering this request.

Regards,

Luke Welling

30 January, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland –
Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment**

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park to trail ride, walk my dogs, and bird watch. Not simultaneously of course. It's a beautiful area at all times of the year.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because it can be difficult to ask a horse to go through an overgrown trail. Plus on foot I don't want to trip or get caught on vines or branches while I'm looking overhead at birds. Most importantly being out in nature is great for both my physical and mental health.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Meredith L. Ingram
Gaithersburg MD



Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association
Secretary, Christina Micek, on behalf of entire membership
11611 Glen Road
Potomac, MD 20854

Testimony for Ho.Co. 5-25

Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and
Motorized Equipment
By: Senator Hester
February 03, 2025

Dear Howard County Delegation (hoc1@mlis.state.md.us),

I am writing as the delegated representative of Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association, on behalf of our entire membership. Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trails Association is a local nonprofit organization that was founded in 1960 to make sure trails and easements were recorded and stayed open for equestrians and hikers as development began to encroach on once open land. Many of these trails today make up part of our county park trail system that everyone can enjoy. Today, our organization educates and advocates for trail access, creation and preservation, as well as provides a volunteer workforce to help build new trails and keep existing trails clear and safe for our members.

As you probably know, Patuxent River State Park straddles both Montgomery and Howard counties. Our members not only enjoy the use of all the trails at Patuxent, but have also joined forces with the Department of Natural Resources and MORE to create 7 miles of new multi-use natural surface trails at Patuxent River State Park. Our membership often enjoy hiking, birding, dog walking and horseback riding on the trails in the area designated state wildlands. Our equestrian membership especially enjoys this area as it is accessible from one of the rare larger trailer parking areas at Annapolis Rock. Our members have voiced increasing concerns about the encroachment of the trail tread, which in part has become impassable recently by thick flora and large downed trees. Efforts to clear the trails with hand tools have not been very successful, creating a safety risk for users as emergency personnel will not have the needed clear passage to assist in urgent situations.

Therefore, we believe this bill's narrowly tailored focus to allow DNR to enter into user agreements with volunteers to use mechanized tools in the service of keeping the existing trails open for first responder access as imperative. On behalf of our membership, I would like to kindly request the Howard Delegation to please support Howard County – Patuxent River

Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment bill Ho.Co. 5-25 through to the 2025 General Assembly Session for safety purposes.

Thank you for your time.

Secretary, Christina Micek

Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association

ROBERT A SCRANTON
18950 WINDSOR FOREST ROAD
MOUNT AIRY, MARYLAND

January 27th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu Chair
Howard County Delegation House Office Building
6 Bladen Street Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation:

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park to hike, hunt, fish and ride horses.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park trails for access, especially emergency access for first responders. There have been many instances when emergency personnel have had difficulty accessing the park for rescue operations. The local fire department, Lisbon Volunteer Fire Co., has a specific RTV rescue vehicle that they cannot utilize unless the trail system is maintained. I personally assisted in the rescue of a hunter who was lost, dehydrated, disoriented, and needed medical assistance. I guided the first responders into the park however their RTV could not get through.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Robert A Scranton

Robert Scranton
Howard County Resident

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
410.991.0593
equinoxstables@yahoo.com

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to support this new bill that would allow motorized vehicles and equipment in Patuxent River State Park Annapolis Rock area. The trails there are used frequently by horse riders and it is one of the areas we like to ride in. The trails are in very bad shape for lack of the ability to clean and maintain them using motorized vehicles and equipment. The horse industry is a big part of the Maryland economy and maintaining our trail system is important for the horse community. Thank you and I urge you to pass this bill.

Sharon A. Benz, Ph.D.

Woodbine, MD

February 1, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho. Co. 5-25 – Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation,

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho. Co. 5-25 to authorize the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to enter into agreements with interested parties to use motor vehicles and motorized equipment to maintain existing trails within the Patuxent River Wildland (the Park).

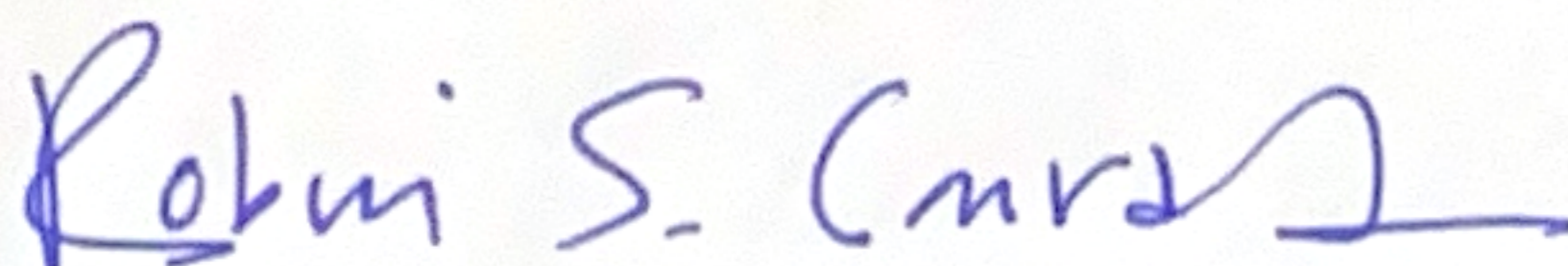
I have been a long-time user of the Park for fox chasing with Howard-County – Iron Bridge Hounds, pleasure horseback riding with my friends, and walking my dogs. I commend the State of Maryland for designating this area as a Wildland to protect and preserve its availability to the public.

The ability of DNR to enter into use agreements to maintain existing trails is essential to the public's continued ability to safely access and enjoy the Park as intended. The use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment to clear and maintain existing trails will help preserve access and safety from the proliferation of overgrown trails, low-hanging tree limbs and deadfall that has made the Park increasingly more hazardous and inaccessible over the past few years.

Entering into use agreements *with volunteers* to clear and maintain existing trails with motor vehicles and motorized equipment is a smart, efficient, and good government approach to protecting a valuable public resource. What could be better than having a volunteer workforce on hand to supplement what might be erroneously considered discretionary government spending?

Please demonstrate your commitment to making the Patuxent River Wildland safe and accessible by passing Ho. Co. 5-25.

Sincerely,



Robin S. Conrad
Brookeville, MD

January 27th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park for horseback riding.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because the park has become unsafe to enter due to all the invasive plant foliage which harms humans and animals including the wildlife habitat.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Susan Warfield

Clarksville , Maryland

January 27th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of Ho.Co. 5-25 –Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

For many years my family and I have ridden the trails at Patuxent. Its proximity to our farm and the miles of trails it offers are one of the great assets of living in Western Howard County. For a long time, we were allowed to clear trails when a tree would fall during a storm or when briars would overgrow the path. But when it became illegal to do so with mechanized equipment, the trails started to become impassable.

This has made the park less desirable to ride, bike, or hike at because making a loop was impossible at times, requiring us to back track or try to navigate off the path around the fallen debris.

There is no logical reason why a park used by the community shouldn't be maintained by the community with oversight from the DNR. Residents of Western Howard County stand ready to give back to the park they use and love, we simply ask for the right to do so.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25 and give residents that right to invest in their community.

Sincerely,

Stephen P. Witty
Woodbine, MD

To whom it concerns:

I am a resident in the Cabin Branch Farms neighborhood. Our property backs to protected park lands and has needed trails cleared. Currently, TROT has been working hard to get the local Patuxent State Park Wilderness area trails cleared yet it has been an obstacle for volunteers using only hand tools. If mechanized equipment can be used to clean up the trails including the huge trees removed we can access the wooded areas.

I have interest in this new Bill, allowing volunteers to use mechanized equipment for the sake of creating a safe passage through the wilderness area. My family loves using the woods and trails, and hope you will please consider this testimony letter for the hearing today and help keep local trails open for all of us.

With much appreciation!

Tessa Winn

January 27th, 2025

Delegate Chao Wu
Chair, Howard County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

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Dear Chairman Wu and Members of the Howard County Delegation;

I am writing to express my strong support for Ho.Co. 5-25, which aims to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to enter into user agreements with interested parties to use motorized equipment for trail maintenance within the Patuxent River Wildland.

I use the park to horseback ride, fox chase and hike.

It is important to me to be able to maintain the park because it is a beautiful public resource that should be able to be enjoyed. For past years, it is almost prohibited from being utilized at all. When I have been in the park, many trails are completely impassable, and others are getting overgrown with invasive species and extensive undergrowth.

It is my hope that you will pass Ho.Co. 5-25, a bill that is deeply important to myself and the community.

Sincerely,

Tracy Diamond, Taxpayer in Mt Airy MD