

LVFC Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Carey McIntosh

Position: FAV

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,

Carey McIntosh. Former Chief & Life Member
Lisbon Volunteer Fire Company
P.O. Box 40 Lisbon, MD 21765
443-463-7220
cmcintosh@lisbonvfc.org

PBHTA Testimony Patuxent Wildlands SB0968.pdf

Uploaded by: Christina Micek

Position: FAV



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

Testimony for SB0968

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

By: Senator Hester

FAVORABLE

March 07, 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.

We would like to give this **written testimony, position FAVORABLE. Senate Bill 0968 would allow, for very limited purposes and by agreement with designated volunteers only, trails in the Patuxent River Wildland (Wildland) to be cleared by mechanized means. The bill will keep park users safe, allow emergency responders to do their jobs, and keep the park thriving for years to come.**

As you might 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.

Without further action, the Wildland's multiuse recreational trails will be lost or, in the worst possible outcome, a Wildland visitor will sustain a serious injury deep in the forest, and emergency responders will be unable to reach them.

The volunteer allowance would be limited: only specific volunteers who carry insurance, are appropriately credentialed, (if necessary, such as chainsaw certification), and have entered into an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources would be permitted to utilize motorized equipment on currently existing trails in the Wildland.

TROT does not support any amendment to SB 0938 that disallows volunteer user agreements. The Park's resources are already maximized; trail maintenance can only be achieved in partnership with volunteers. This is not a new concept; the Park might look to its sister park, Patapsco Valley State Park, for an example of a successful volunteer trail maintenance model.

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 committee to please support– Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment bill **SB0968** for safety purposes.

Thank you for your time.
Secretary, Christina Micek
Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Association

Hester SB 968 Testimony .docx.pdf

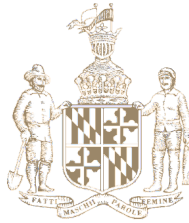
Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 304
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3671 • 301-858-3671
800-492-7122 Ext. 3671
KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB 968 - Howard County - Patuxent River Wildland - Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment Ho. Co. 5-25

March 11, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of SB 968, which aims to balance environmental preservation with public safety by ensuring trail maintenance within the Patuxent Wildland.

Currently, the trails within the Patuxent Wildland, cherished by so many Howard County residents, have become overgrown and increasingly unsafe. Due to existing restrictions on using motorized equipment in designated state wildland areas, routine trail maintenance has been limited. As a result, the trails have become overgrown and pose a risk not only to park visitors, but also to first responders, whose access in emergency situations is hindered.

Recognizing the urgency of this issue, my office began working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) last year to find a solution. In February, DNR verbally agreed to enter into an MOU with the Howard County Iron Bridge Hounds (HCIBH) which would allow them to maintain trails for emergency access. At this time, we did not believe legislation was necessary. However, unforeseen legal challenges withheld DNR from granting HCIBH authorization to use motorized equipment to maintain the trails.

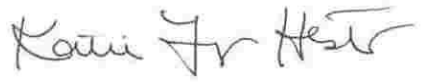
SB 968 ensures that the Patuxent Wildlands remain protected, while allowing for emergency access to the trails in worst case scenarios. Specifically, this bill allows DNR to enter into use agreements with volunteers to facilitate the use of motorized vehicles and equipment within the Patuxent Wildland for the **sole purpose** of maintaining **existing** trails to ensure clear and safe access.

This legislation reflects the concerns of my constituents, many of whom have written in to express their support for a practical solution. Passing this legislation will allow parkgoers to continue to enjoy hiking, hunting, and horseback riding safely by maintaining existing trails. As

administrations change, we must ensure the continued preservation of this beautiful land while prioritizing our citizens' safety.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 968.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Katie Fry Hester

Merged HoCo Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

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 to 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 Steinfert
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". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

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).

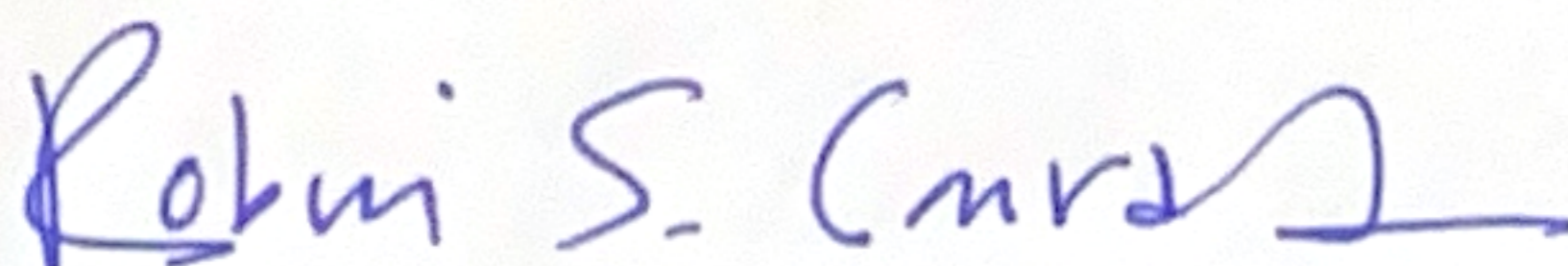
I have been a long-time user of the Park for fox chasing with Howard-County – Iron Bridge Hounds, pleasure horseback riding with my friends, and walking my dogs. I commend the State of Maryland for designating this area as a Wildland to protect and preserve its availability to the public.

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

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, 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

Senator Hester Letter to DNR, Patuxent River Wildl

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 304
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3671 · 301-858-3671
800-492-7122 Ext. 3671
KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 8, 2024

Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto
Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401

Assistant Secretary Peditto,

Thank you for your willingness to work with District 9A constituents to help us manage trails in the Patuxent River Wildlands for emergencies. I appreciate your ongoing partnership in balancing the preservation of our wildlands with the need to keep trails clear and safe for use.

This letter is to confirm that DNR is working to grant the Howard County - Iron Bridge Hounds, Inc. (HIBH) access to clear trails for emergencies in the Wildlands from April-September of 2024. I am hoping that a completed Memorandum of Understanding for HIBH to clear trails for emergencies with mechanized/motorized equipment will be completed as soon as possible, upon receipt of the requested maps. Please let me know what a reasonable timeframe might be, as I know HIBH was hoping to begin clearing the trails April 1st.

Again, I appreciate your ongoing partnership. I appreciate a response at your earliest convenience confirming the potential timeline. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
District 9 - Howard & Montgomery County

CC: Secretary Josh Kurtz
Mr. Dylan Behler, Director of Legislative and Constituent Services
Mr. Darragh Moriarty, Counsel Education, Energy & Environment
Ms. Ann Moxley
Mr. Rob Scranton
Mr. Don Reuwer

SB 0968- Trail Riders of Today- FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Meaghan McDermott

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 0968
Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and
Motorized Equipment
Ho. Co. 5-25
In the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Committee Hearing on March 11, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE

Trail Riders of Today (TROT) urges the committee to favorably report and pass Senate Bill 0968.

Senate Bill 0968 would allow, *for very limited purposes and by agreement with designated volunteers only*, trails in the Patuxent River Wildland (Wildland) to be cleared by mechanized means. The bill will keep park users safe, allow emergency responders to do their jobs, and keep the park thriving for years to come.

TROT is a nonprofit dedicated to enjoying, maintaining, and expanding sustainable trails for equestrian use. TROT members, in partnership with other organizations, volunteer countless hours maintaining and clearing established trails in the Wildland. Because of the wildland designation, this work has been done with hand tools or, in some cases, with the assistance of *actual* horsepower, when TROT members have utilized their horses to drag fallen trees off trails. While this is an impressive display of dedication and strength by our members (and, in some cases, their horses!), it is not sustainable. Without further action, the Wildland's multiuse recreational trails will be lost or, in the worst possible outcome, a Wildland visitor will sustain a serious injury deep in the forest, and emergency responders will be unable to reach them.

Senate Bill 0968 strikes a delicate balance between preservation and safety. The Wildland comprises 1,579 acres of the much larger Patuxent River State Park (Park). The Park spans portions of Howard and Montgomery counties and is 6,700 acres in total. TROT deeply respects the importance of wild spaces. However, this must be balanced with the reality that the Park is situated in a densely populated semi-urban area nestled between Baltimore, Frederick, and Washington, DC. The Park receives many visitors, some of whom are underprepared for the Park's conditions or for sudden weather changes, and may require rescue or emergency care. Looking at a map, the Wildland bifurcates the Park, meaning loss of trails within the Wildland makes it very difficult for emergency responders to not only reach distressed visitors within the Wildland, but also to move efficiently from one side of the Park to another.

SB 0968's volunteer allowance would be limited: only specific volunteers who carry insurance, are appropriately credentialed, (if necessary, such as chainsaw certification), and have entered into an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources would be permitted to utilize motorized equipment on currently existing trails in the Wildland.

TROT does not support any amendment to SB 0968 that disallows volunteer user agreements. The Park's resources are already maximized; trail maintenance can only be achieved in partnership with volunteers. This is not a new concept; the Park might look to its sister park, Patapsco Valley State Park, for an example of a successful volunteer trail maintenance model.

TROT urges passage of SB 0968, without amendment, to preserve navigable and safe trails for all users of the Patuxent River Wildland, especially emergency responders tasked with lifesaving duties within the Patuxent River State Park.

If you would like additional information on this bill or the underlying issues it addresses, please contact Courtney Frye, TROT's Howard County Area Coordinator, at boardmember06@trot-md.org, or Meaghan McDermott, TROT Board Member and Howard County resident at boardmember04@trot-md.org

www.trot-MD.org

_Vote Sheet HoCo 05-25 (SB968).docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Rebecca Doring

Position: FAV

Howard County Delegation

Voting Record – 2025 Session

Bill Number: 5LR0909

HoCo Bill Number: Ho.Co. 5-25

Vote Date: 2/6/2025

Final Action: Passed

Motion:

- Favorable Favorable with Amendment Withdrawn

Name	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Excused
Lam, Clarence, Chair, Sen.	✓			
Guzzone, Guy, Sen.	✓			
Hester, Katie Fry, Sen.	✓			

Committee Reporter Musa Jafri

HoCo 5-25 (SB575) Senate Committee Letter.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Rebecca Doring

Position: FAV

SENATOR CLARENCE K. LAM
SENATE CHAIR

MILLER SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
11 BLADEN STREET, ROOM 420
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SENATOR GUY GUZZONE
SENATOR KATIE FRY HESTER



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
HOWARD COUNTY DELEGATION

DELEGATE CHAO WU
HOUSE CHAIR

DELEGATE NATALIE ZIEGLER
HOUSE VICE CHAIR

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
6 BLADEN STREET, ROOM 217
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

DELEGATE VANESSA E. ATTERBEARY
DELEGATE JESSICA FELDMARK
DELEGATE PAM LANMAN GUZZONE
DELEGATE TERRI L. HILL
DELEGATE JEN TERRASA
DELEGATE COURTNEY WATSON

March 3, 2025
The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy and the Environment
The Maryland State Senate
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, 2 West Wing
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman,

The Howard County Delegation **voted in favor** of the following bill that will appear before your committee:

SB968 -- Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment

We request a favorable committee report. Please contact the Howard County Delegation office at hoc1@mlis.state.md.us if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clarence K. Lam".

Senator Clarence K. Lam, MD, MPH
Senate Chair
Howard County Delegation

Chao Wu, PhD

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chao Wu".

Delegate Chao Wu, PhD
House Chair
Howard County Delegation

HoCo Bill Support Letter T.Bourdeaux.pdf

Uploaded by: Sandra Bourdeaux

Position: FAV

Ho. Co. 5-25
Howard County – Patuxent River Wildland – Use of Motor Vehicles
and Motorized Equipment
Ho. Co. 5-25
In the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Committee Hearing on March 11, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE

March 7, 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

Testimony Letter - Ho. Co. 5-25 - S.Bourdeaux.pdf

Uploaded by: Sandra Bourdeaux

Position: FAV

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

SB0968_DNR_SWA_EEE_3-11-25.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Wilson

Position: FWA



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

March 11, 2025

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 968 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Howard County - Patuxent River Wildland - Use of Motor Vehicles and Motorized Equipment Ho. Co. 5-25

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

The Department supports SB 968 with amendments because as amended it would make the language related to the Patuxent River Wildland consistent with statutory language for other wildlands. It will also provide the Department with the express authority to use mechanized and motorized equipment for specific limited purposes such as maintaining emergency access.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Maryland Wildlands are areas of state-owned land or water that have retained their wilderness character or contain rare or vanishing species of plant or animal life or similar features worthy of preservation. Designated by the Maryland General Assembly, they may include unique ecological, geological, scenic and contemplative recreational areas. State-designated Wildlands are managed for passive recreation only, including hiking, hunting, fishing, bird watching, horseback riding and nature interpretation. The Patuxent River Wildland is a total of 1,579 acres within Patuxent River State Park in Howard and Montgomery Counties.

BILL EXPLANATION

SB 968 as drafted authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to enter into certain use agreements to facilitate the use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment for the purpose of maintaining certain paths within the Patuxent River Wildland.

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)
emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8426 (office) ♦ 443-223-1176 (cell)

BY:
(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 968
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, strike in their entirety lines 2 through 3, inclusive, and substitute “**Natural Resources – Wildland Areas – Patuxent River Wildland**”; strike beginning with “enter” in line 5 down through “paths” in line 7 and substitute “use mechanical or motorized equipment for certain activities”; after line 8, insert:

“BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Natural Resources

Section 5–1203(a)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)”; and in line 11, strike “5–1212” and substitute “5–1203(h)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On pages 1 through 2, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 17 on page 1 through line 9 on page 2, inclusive, and substitute:

“5–1203.

(a) (1) In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the State, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is the policy of the General Assembly to secure for the people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of State wildlands.

(2) For this purpose there is established a State wildlands preservation system composed of areas in the State designated by the General Assembly as “wildland areas”.

(3) The wildland areas shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the people of Maryland in a manner that will leave them unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wildlands, to provide for their protection, preservation of their wildland character, and for gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wildlands.

(4) A State land may not be designated as a wildland area except as provided for in this section or by a subsequent act.

(h) (1) Pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, that property in Howard and Montgomery counties containing approximately 1579 acres and described as follows is a Type 2 State wildland and shall be named the "Patuxent River Wildland":

Parcel 1:

Beginning at a point on the south shore of the Patuxent River at the eastern margin of the right-of-way of the Hipsley Mill Road, and proceeding counterclockwise about the boundary of the wildland area, southwesterly with said right-of-way margin approximately 3,050 feet to the southern boundary of Patuxent River State Park (hereafter the Park). Thence leaving Hipsley Mill Road and following said Park boundary southeasterly approximately 1,700 feet; thence leaving the Park boundary and with the forest bounding a field, on the right hand, easterly approximately 1,400 feet. Still with the forest edge southwesterly approximately 300 feet, thence easterly approximately 300 feet, thence southeasterly approximately 800 feet, thence southwesterly approximately 475 feet, again to the Park boundary. Thence with said Park boundary southeasterly approximately 550 feet. Then leaving the Park boundary and again with the forest edge northeasterly approximately 1,150 feet, southeasterly approximately 400 feet, southerly approximately 275 feet, thence southeasterly approximately 750 feet, thence northeasterly approximately 550 feet, thence southeasterly approximately 250 feet, thence northeasterly approximately 500 feet. Thence still with the forest edge southeasterly approximately 600 feet, thence southwesterly approximately 750 feet, thence easterly approximately 150 feet thence southerly approximately 250 feet, thence easterly approximately 900 feet. Thence again with the forest edge northeasterly approximately 1,100 feet, thence easterly approximately 300 feet, thence northeasterly approximately 1,400 feet, thence southeasterly approximately 650 feet, thence northerly approximately 1,050 feet, thence northeasterly approximately 550 feet, thence northerly approximately 420 feet to the Patuxent River. Thence crossing the river in a northwesterly direction approximately 100 feet. Thence with the forest edge and the river southeasterly approximately 300 feet; then leaving the river and following the forest edge northeasterly with a field on the right, approximately 150 feet thence northerly approximately 420 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 475 feet, thence northerly approximately 400 feet. Thence still with the forest edge easterly approximately 150 feet, thence northerly approximately 650 feet, thence westerly approximately 900 feet, thence northerly approximately 800 feet. Thence leaving the forest edge and cutting through a narrow neck of woods, still northerly approximately 200 feet, then again with the forest edge westerly approximately 550 feet. Again cutting through a neck of woods still westerly approximately 550 feet. Once again with the forest edge southwesterly approximately 450 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 1,175 feet, thence southerly approximately 500 feet, thence westerly with the forest edge approximately 300 feet, thence northeasterly

approximately 1,375 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 375 feet, thence southwesterly approximately 650 feet, thence northeasterly approximately 450 feet, thence still with the forest edge easterly approximately 1,150 feet to the Park boundary. Thence with said Park boundary northeasterly approximately 825 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 700 feet, thence southwesterly approximately 800 feet, thence westerly approximately 350 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 275 feet to an old field. Thence with the field on the right hand and with the forest edge southwesterly approximately 375 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 425 feet to Hipsley Mill Road. Thence with Hipsley Mill Road southwesterly approximately 600 feet to the edge of an old field. Thence leaving Hipsley Mill Road and with the field on the right hand and with the forest edge southeasterly approximately 350 feet, thence southwesterly through a narrow neck of woods approximately 525 feet, thence still with the forest edge southeasterly approximately 1,150 feet, thence westerly approximately 300 feet, thence southeasterly approximately 500 feet thence southerly approximately 400 feet, thence easterly approximately 175 feet, thence with the field on the right hand and with the forest edge southerly approximately 550 feet, thence westerly approximately 200 feet, thence southwesterly approximately 475 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 250 feet, thence northerly approximately 500 feet. Thence still with the forest edge northerly approximately 350 feet, thence southerly approximately 550 feet, thence northwesterly approximately 1,600 feet to the Hipsley Mill Road. Thence with the eastern margin of said road right-of-way, southwesterly approximately 1,250 feet, thence southerly approximately 750 feet again crossing the Patuxent River to the beginning point.

A twenty-five hundredths (0.25) of an acre parking area located approximately 50 feet northeast of the Patuxent River along the east side of Hipsley Mill Road shall be excluded from the Patuxent River Wildland.

Parcel 2

Beginning at a point, said point being the beginning of the 2nd line of a tract of land which by deed dated January 24, 1975, and recorded in the land records of Howard County in Liber 719, Folio 027, was conveyed by Wiley G. Griffith to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Natural Resources, and running with said second line, south 69 degrees 25 minutes 30 seconds east 818.49 feet to a point, said point being the beginning of the eleventh line of a tract of land which by deed dated, June 26, 1969, and recorded in the land records of Howard County in Liber 513, Folio 289, was conveyed by Theron P. and Elizabeth Sager to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Forest and Parks, and running with said line, south 70 degrees 50 minutes 20 seconds east 130.00 feet more or less to a point, north 16 degrees 30 minutes 00 seconds east 960.00 feet to a point on the southern edge of Annapolis Rock Road, thence running with the south side of said road in a easterly direction to the intersection and western edge of Hipsley Mill Road, thence running with the western edge of Hipsley Mill Road in a southwesterly direction 1800 feet

to a point in the western edge of said road, said point also being distant north 36 degrees 46 minutes 30 seconds west 150.00 feet from a point located north 56 degrees 03 minutes 23 seconds west 20.00 from the end of the 33rd line of a tract of land which by deed dated, February 1, 1972, and recorded in the land records of Howard County in Liber 584, Folio 211, was conveyed by George G. and Sidney Ann Adams Wilson to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Forests and Parks, and running thence, north 56 degrees 03 minutes 23 seconds west 890 feet more or less to a point in the 30th line of said aforementioned conveyance, thence running with part of said 30th line, south 28 degrees 39 minutes 20 seconds west 1200.00 feet more or less to a point, north 67 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 650.00 feet more or less to a point, north 81 degrees 30 minutes 00 seconds west 800.00 feet more or less feet to a point, north 33 degrees 30 minutes 00 seconds east 300.00 feet more or less to a point, north 57 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 430.00 feet more or less to a point, south 09 degrees 30 minutes 00 seconds west 550.00 feet more or less feet to a point, south 70 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds east 930.00 feet more or less to a point, north 66 degrees 30 minutes 00 seconds east 270.00 feet more or less to a point, south 66 degrees 30 minutes 00 seconds east 840.00 feet more or less to a point, south 31 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds east 450.00 feet more or less to a point on the west edge of Hipsley Mill Road, thence running with the west edge of said road 2850 feet more or less to a point, said point being distant north 76 degrees 02 minutes 12 seconds west 20.00 feet from the beginning of the first line of a tract of land which by deed dated, March 8, 1975, and recorded in the land records of Montgomery County in Liber 4633, Folio 650, was conveyed by William B. King to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Natural Resources, and running thence, north 76 degrees 02 minutes 12 seconds west 56.51 feet to a point, north 67 degrees 22 minutes 12 seconds west 612.57 feet to a point, north 86 degrees 44 minutes 42 seconds west 219.50 feet to a point, said point being the end of the third line of said aforementioned conveyance from King, thence running, north 86 degrees 44 minutes 42 seconds west 221.81 feet to a point, said point being the end of the 11th line of a tract of land which by deed dated June 10, 1971, and recorded in the land records of Montgomery County in Liber 4081, Folio 247, was conveyed by Margaret Gallagher to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Forest and Parks, and running thence with said eleventh line, north 66 degrees 36 minutes 14 seconds west 200.00 feet to a point, south 29 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 1120.00 feet more or less to a point, north 83 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 480.00 feet more or less to a point, said point being distant south 34 degrees 16 minutes 36 seconds 200.00 feet from the end of the 7th line of the last mentioned deed, thence running, south 07 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 800.00 feet more or less to a point, said point being in the northernmost line of the PEPCO transmission line right of way, thence running along the northern line of said right of way in a northwesterly direction 580.00 feet more or less to a point, thence leaving said right of way and running north 11 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 630.00 feet more or less to a point, said point being the end of the seventh line of a tract of land which by deed dated September 2, 1971, and recorded in the land records of Montgomery County in Liber 4118, Folio 689, was conveyed by A. W. Thompson to the State of Maryland, to the use of the

Department of Forest and Parks, and running thence with the 8th, 9th and 10th line of the last mentioned deed, north 03 degrees 31 minutes 50 seconds west 305.50 feet to a point, north 50 degrees 13 minutes 45 seconds west 717.75 feet to a point, south 41 degrees 58 minutes 35 seconds west 492.54 feet to a point, said point being the end of the 1st line of a tract of land which by deed dated January 6, 1981, and recorded in the land records of Montgomery County in Liber 5641, Folio 156, was conveyed by Jerome W. and Ella Jean Cassidy to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Natural Resources, and running thence with the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th line of said deed, south 47 degrees 16 minutes 25 seconds east 656.72 feet to a point, south 47 degrees 16 minutes 25 seconds east 232.01 feet to a point, south 68 degrees 42 minutes 42 seconds west 76.83 feet to a point, north 75 degrees 29 minutes 58 seconds west 122.09 feet to a point, south 85 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 208.00 feet to a point in the northernmost right of way line of PEPCO and running with said right of way in a northwesterly direction 2100.00 feet more or less to a point, said point being south 65 degrees 44 minutes 39 seconds east from the end of the 2nd line of a tract of land which by deed dated September 19, 1984, and recorded in the land records of Montgomery County in Liber 6566, Folio 868, was conveyed by Kenneth and Nancy Zastrow to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Natural Resources, and running thence, north 08 degrees 30 minutes 45 seconds east 77.00 feet more or less to a point, north 13 degrees 18 minutes 12 seconds east 149.28 feet to a point, north 09 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds 102.01 feet to a point, said point being the end of the 11th line of a tract of land which by deed dated September 2, 1971 and recorded in the land records of Montgomery County in Liber 4118, Folio 689, was conveyed by A. W. Thompson to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Natural Resources, and running thence, north 46 degrees 12 minutes 00 seconds east 1537.00 feet to a point on the south bank of the Patuxent River, thence running with the south bank of said river in a northwesterly direction 300.00 feet more or less to a point on the east side of Madcap Road, thence running with the east side of Madcap Road in a northwesterly direction 600.00 feet more or less to a point on the easternmost line of a gas line right of way, thence running with the easternmost line of said right of way in a northerly direction 24000.00 feet more or less to a point, thence running north 88 degrees 00 seconds 00 minutes east 250.00 feet more or less to the beginning.

Within this parcel of the Patuxent River Wildland are twenty (20) acres of leased agricultural land located off the west side of Hipsley Mill Road approximately 700 feet from the Patuxent River. This use may continue until December 31, 1998.

Parcel 3

Beginning at a point, said point being situated south 18 degrees 43 minutes 03 seconds west 859.29 feet from the beginning of the 12th line of a tract of land which by deed dated December 3, 1975, and recorded in the land records of Howard County in Liber 747, Folio 330, was conveyed by Howard and Mary Nicodemus to the State of Maryland, to the use of

the Department of Forest and Parks, said point also being a corner of the previously established Patuxent River Wildland, and running thence, south 18 degrees 43 minutes 03 seconds west 400 feet more or less to a point, south 57 degrees 39 minutes 47 seconds east 935.90 feet to a point, south 69 degrees 09 minutes 01 seconds east 1,435.28 feet to a point, south 08 degrees 27 minutes 54 seconds west 400.00 feet more or less to a point in a line of the previously mentioned wildland, thence running with the outline of said wildland to the point of beginning.

Within this parcel of the Patuxent River Wildland are thirty (30) acres of leased agricultural land immediately south of Cabin Branch. This use may continue until December 31, 1999.

Parcel 4

Beginning at a point, said point being the end of the 4th line of a tract of land which by deed dated March 10 1972, and recorded in the land records of Montgomery County in Liber 4193, Folio 797, was conveyed by Walter Tarlton Bryan to the State of Maryland, to the use of the Department of Forests and Parks, said point also being a corner of the previously established Patuxent River Wildland, and running thence, south 45 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds west 450.00 feet more or less to a point, said point being in the northerly right of way of the PEPCO transmission line, thence running with said right of way in a northwesterly direction 2200.00 feet more or less to a point in a line of the aforementioned wildland, and running thence with the outline of said wildland to the point of beginning.

Within this parcel of the Patuxent River Wildland are twenty (20) acres of leased agricultural land located along the PEPCO power line right of way approximately 2400 feet east of Hipsley Mill Road. This use may continue until December 31, 1998.

(2) NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISIONS OF THIS TITLE, TO PRESERVE, MAINTAIN, STUDY, RESEARCH, AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE AREA'S ECOLOGICAL FEATURES AND RARE HABITATS, WITHIN THE PATUXENT RIVER WILDLAND, THE DEPARTMENT MAY:

(I) RETAIN, MAINTAIN, REMOVE, OR REPLACE EXISTING TRAILS USING MECHANICAL OR MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT; AND

(II) REMOVE, REPLACE, OR DISPOSE OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES USING MECHANICAL OR MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT."