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Harford County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB1184 – Port of Deposit State Historical Park – Size and Scope**

**February 26, 2025**

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

HB1184 extends the deadline for the Bainbridge Development Corporation to transfer certain property to the Department of Natural Resources. In 2023 and 2024, there was legislation that required two separate DNR reports on the State's ability to create the size and scope of the Port of Deposit State Historical Park. **The most recent report in 2024, indicated that the preliminary estimated budget is \$56,053,200 with no funding source.** Based on this, if the entire property were to be transferred over to the State, it will likely sit idle with no action being taken due to the high price tag and no funding source. This bill removes a great deal of cost and gives the park an actual chance to be created and thrive by reducing the acreage to be transferred from 12 to 19 acres, which is stated in the bill, and includes the Snow Hill property.

This bill, if passed, would push the timeline back up to one year but allows for the transfer to occur anytime before that year is up, once DNR and BDC determine the boundary details. Furthermore, the bill designates the Snow Hill archaeological site and adjacent wooded conservation area to be transferred for inclusion in what would be Port of Deposit State Historical Park.

For context purposes, the Snow Hill Archeological Site was the location of a Free Black community that was established in the Port of Deposit area by the mid-1800s. Free Black merchants and laborers established this community on leased land and worked in and around the Town of Port Deposit. Based on survey responses from the stakeholder group, 70% of the responses agreed that Snow Hill is the most important aspect of Port of Deposit Historical State Park.

I believe this legislation which focuses on Snow Hill shows a clear priority to educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.

I respectfully request a FAVORABLE report from the committee.

Sincerely,

Delegate Teresa E. Reilly