



Testimony on HB 609

March 3, 2026 – State Transfer Tax – Land Preservation Special Fund – Revenue Allocation  
House Appropriations Committee  
Ann H. Jones - annholmesjones@gmail.com

**Position:** Favorable

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Baltimore County Land Trust Coalition. We represent the 5 active Land Trust in the county – The Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, the Land Preservation Trust, The Manor Conservancy, Neighborspace Baltimore County and the Long Green Valley Conservancy.

Land Trusts work with willing landowners who are interested in voluntarily protecting their family farms in perpetuity. These are not decisions lightly made. Families can take years, and sometimes decades to decide to protect a farm. The credibility of the program, and indeed of those of us on the ground who are negotiating in good faith is severely damaged when funds are suddenly no longer available.

DNR has estimated that the \$100 million cut from the land preservation program will result in 20,000 less acres being protected. To put that in perspective Gunpowder State Park is 18,000 acres; Patapsco Valley State Park is 16,000 acres; and Sandy Point State Park, arguably one of the most popular parks in the state is 786 acres. The average farm size in Maryland is 158 acres, so 125 farms could be protected with conservation easements were the funding made available. These lands represent significant assets for the economic viability, health and ecology of the state.

We understand the budget constraints and urge you to consider reinstating/repaying the \$100 million as soon as the budget allows. Thank you for helping to make sure that our most important farms, forests and ecological areas are indeed protected in perpetuity.