



Committee: Budget and Taxation

Testimony on: SB0424 “State Transfer Tax – Land Preservation Special Fund – Revenue Allocation”

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 18, 2026

Valleys Planning Council, a non-profit that conserves land and resources, preserves historic character and maintains the rural feel and land uses in northwestern Baltimore County, urges SB0424 receive a favorable report.

Redirecting \$25 million in transfer tax revenue from land protection to the general fund for FY2026-2029 was a short-sighted effort to balance the budget. Slashing funding for land preservation programs reduces their effectiveness not just for the years the funding is drastically reduced; the programs cannot return to their full strength immediately when, if ever, funding restarts.

Lack of funding for land preservation means that land that should be protected, and would be if funding were available, will be lost to development. Once that land is lost, it’s not coming back.

The Maryland the Beautiful Act of 2023 set a goal to permanently protect 40% of the state’s land by 2040. It needs to preserve about more than 550,000 acres to reach that goal. Restoring funding now is the only way to accomplish that.

Valleys Planning Council urges a favorable report on SB0424.

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Valleys Planning Council