



LPT LAND PRESERVATION TRUST

13501 Falls Road  
Cockeysville, Maryland 21030

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### Testimony

#### **State Transfer Tax – Land Preservation Special Fund – Revenue Allocation SB424/HB609 House Appropriations Committee Budget and Taxation Committee February 18, 2026**

#### **Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chairman Rosapepe and Committee Members,

Since 1969, Maryland has been a national leader in protecting open space for nature, agriculture, recreation and preservation through a suite of programs known as “Program Open Space.” Funded by dedicated revenue from the real estate transfer tax, Program Open Space enables land conservation for forests, farms, wildlife habitat and parks.

The land preservation community recognizes the frequent budget challenges faced by the state. We also recognize the need to periodically redirect transfer tax funds to other purposes. Since the inception of the transfer tax funds have repeatedly been redirected when times are tight. In 2016 thanks to strong bipartisan support legislation was passed that acknowledges the need for these transfers but requires the funds to be re-paid over the following three fiscal years. This approach is responsive both to the need to balance the budget and the need to provide adequate funding to protect our farms and forests.

The FY26 BRFA redirected \$100 million over 4 years from the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, the Rural Legacy program, and the State-Side Program Open Space land acquisition program. For FY26 this represented a 69% cut to MALPF and Rural Legacy, and through FY 29 it will be approximately a 30% annual reduction. Furthermore, the BRFA contained a provision that eliminates the requirement for any repayment of the \$100 million cut.

SB 424 would require repayment of the majority of the \$100 million, and is consistent with the 2016 legislation and Maryland's land preservation goals. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation that will increase the pace of land preservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ann H. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ann" being the most prominent.

Ann H. Jones, Easement Administrator