



Maryland Division
The Izaak Walton League of America
707 Conservation Lane
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878-2983

DATE: March 31, 2026

TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment

RE: Support MD HB1267- Patuxent Research Refuge and Beltsville Agricultural Research Center – Zoning Classification (Protecting Patuxent Research Refuge Act)

Honorable Senators Feldman and Kagan:

On behalf of the Maryland Division-Izaak Walton League (MD-IWLA), I am asking you to support HB1267- Patuxent Research Refuge (PRR) and Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)– Zoning Classification. This bill will allow local zoning and restrictions on development to preserve the natural areas of the PRR in Anne Arundel and Prince George’s Counties and BARC in Prince George’s County if the federal government decides to surplus these properties and transfer ownership. The PRR has been referred to as the ‘green lungs’ of this region, providing 13,000 acres of forest, meadow, and wetlands that give its urban and suburban visitors a respite from the surrounding intense development. With many unique and sensitive species found at the PRR, development could stress these natural areas in ways that would be irreversible. The large undeveloped areas at BARC add their own natural filters from pollution and for wildlife habitat.

The PRR provides hiking, birding, fishing and hunting opportunities not readily available elsewhere in this very developed part of Maryland. With fewer fishing and hunting opportunities in this area, it is likely there will be a decline in people getting licenses and permits to pursue these activities. This will reduce revenues for the state of Maryland and provide fewer dollars for protecting and enhancing natural areas and wildlife. Many of our members became highly motivated conservationists because of their fishing and hunting experiences.

Chartered in 1945, the MD-IWLA (www.marylandiwla.org) includes over 4,300 avid anglers, hunters, and outdoor sports enthusiasts across Maryland who are committed to the wise stewardship of our soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife.

Please support HB1267 and assure that the unique PRR natural areas and the BARC campus will maintain their critical functions as undeveloped and low intensity uses in this highly developed part of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Curt Howard, President
Maryland Division-Izaak Walton League of America