

Re: UNFAVORABLE report for SB1005

March 24, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

Thank you for your service to Maryland.

As a resident of Prince George's County (PGC), I respectfully urge the Committee to report unfavorably on Senate Bill 1005.

SB 1005 effectively proposes to dismantle the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's by eliminating its shared/centralized general counsel, human resources and information technology functions and instate separate legal counsel, HR and IT hired and directed by each county.

For nearly 11 years, I have been an active volunteer and avid user of M-NCPPC parks across both counties. I also am a leader of a local watershed group (speaking as an individual here), have testified before the PGC Planning Board on numerous development and master plans, and completed PGC's Planning Academy. Based on this involvement across many areas of M-NCPPC, I am compelled to highlight several grave concerns with the bill:

- It will effectively dismantle the commission by creating parallel and siloed legal, HR and IT functions across each county. M-NCPPC was created to ensure sound and coordinated development and parkland management across two highly interconnected and rapidly growing counties adjacent to Washington DC. Establishing parallel, siloed core functions will severely diminish the Commission's ability to ensure development, financial management, park management, trail connectivity and employee equity, harming outcomes in these areas.
- It will increase costs to taxpayers by requiring each county to hire and direct legal, HR and IT functions, without any demonstrated benefit to residents, park users, or employees. The Montgomery County Planning Board estimates an additional cost of \$1 million to taxpayers in Montgomery County alone and we can expect the same for PGC taxpayers. Given the extended economic downturn and revenue deficit in Prince George's, taxpayers simply cannot afford this ill-advised proposal.
- There has not been sufficient transparency or time for many concerned parties to analyze the full effects of the bill. This bill has major implications that must not be handled in a rushed process. The bill was late filed, around February 24, by Prince George's County's senators, and routed to the Rules Committee. It appeared on the EEE hearing schedule on short notice. The PGC Planning Board held an "emergency meeting" with only 15 hours' notice, giving the public little time to analyze the bill or prepare comments. At that emergency meeting, the PGC Planning Board did not have any substantive discussion on the bill and hastily voted to support

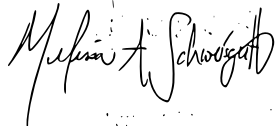
it unanimously in a meeting lasting less than ten minutes - including two members appointed only two days prior.

- Montgomery County Park/Planning was not consulted on the bill and its Planning Board has raised strong opposition. PGC's failure to engage and work with Montgomery County is simply inequitable and disrespectful and fails to consider the proposed bill's ramifications. The bill is proposing major structural changes that cannot be approved unless both counties shape and support them.

Please provide an UNFAVORABLE report and do not allow this harmful bill to advance. Please protect M-NCPPC's integrity, and with it good development, a world-class bi-county parks and trails system, residents, parks users and over 5,000 dedicated M-NCPPC employees.

Thank you very much for considering my comments on this critical issue.

Melissa Schweisguth

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa A. Schweisguth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

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