

From: Beth Novick

Date: March 25, 2026

Subject: UNFAVORABLE – SB 1005 (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission General Counsel and Powers of Local Planning Boards – Alterations)

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Beth Novick. I reside at 2 Forestway in Greenbelt, MD, and I am a small business owner in the Greenbelt community. I am writing to strongly urge an **unfavorable report on SB 1005**.

My husband and I have spent over forty years raising our family and managing a small business in Greenbelt. I recently retired after a thirty-two year career teaching in PGCPs. We have made a purposeful choice to live where we work, and every day we are driven by the goal of ensuring our neighbors and family are safe, happy, and afforded every opportunity to thrive.

For the sake of accountability and community context, I also want to note that our Greenbelt district was recently represented by Ingrid Watson—wife of Senator Ron Watson—who has now transitioned to her appointment as CEO of the Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation. As a business owner, I am particularly attuned to how leadership transitions and legislative shifts like SB 1005 impact our local economic landscape.

I am deeply concerned that this legislation would dismantle the coordinated, bi-county structure of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). This commission has successfully served our region for nearly a century by ensuring that Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties work in tandem on critical infrastructure and environmental goals.

In a place like Greenbelt, M-NCPPC is the invisible hand behind almost everything involving land, from the local parks where my grandchildren play to the zoning laws that affect my business.

Key concerns for Greenbelt:

- **Threat to Regional Transit Coordination:** Greenbelt sits at a vital crossroads of regional transit. I believe that continued, seamless cooperation with Montgomery County regarding the Purple Line is essential for our local economy and residents. SB 1005 threatens to fragment the very administrative and legal frameworks that allow these bi-county projects to move forward efficiently.
- **Economic Impact on Small Businesses:** As a small business owner, I value the stability and regional connectivity that a unified planning commission provides. Decentralizing legal and administrative functions is a "local mandate" that will likely lead to increased costs and bureaucratic redundancies. These inefficiencies ultimately burden taxpayers and small businesses like mine.
- **Impact on Local Planning and Parks:** Greenbelt's unique identity is tied to its green spaces and thoughtful urban planning. Weakening the central Commission risks undermining the "shared services" model that protects our regional parks and ensures consistent land-use standards across county lines.

- Unnecessary Fragmentation: This bill appears to solve a problem that does not exist while creating new ones—specifically, the duplication of legal counsel and administrative staff for each county. This fragmentation will only make it harder for Greenbelt to advocate for its needs within a cohesive regional vision.

The "bi-county" nature of our planning is not a hindrance; it is a strength that has allowed projects like the Purple Line to bridge our communities. Breaking apart these functions will lead to higher costs, less transparency, and a lack of coordination on the environmental and transportation issues that matter most to Greenbelt.

I respectfully ask for an **unfavorable report on SB 1005**.

Sincerely,

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