



Protecting Land Forever

March 26, 2021

Sen. Paul Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pinsky:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), I am writing to express the Board's position on HB 992 (Natural Resources - Maryland Environmental Trust - Appointment of Trustees), which recently passed the House of Delegates and is now being considered by your committee in the Senate. The all-volunteer Board of Trustees works to advance the goals of MET as provided for in State law. It is critical that the Board maintains a robust and diverse membership to enhance our value to MET and its programs state-wide.

The MET Board did not previously take a position on HB 992 while it was being considered in the House because there is not a consensus among our members as to the ramifications of this bill, or what is the best process for selecting trustees. Some have expressed concerns that having MET's Board consist entirely of members appointed by the government, as proposed in HB 992, would negatively impact MET's ability to secure additional donations of conservation easements as well as steward our existing easements. While MET certainly favors a legislative solution to what has become a complex board selection process, we are not in agreement with the process proposed in HB 992. MET respectfully requests that the Senate oppose this portion of the bill and allow our Board an additional year to come up with a creative plan that addresses both the complexities in current law, while also assuring landowners of the independence of MET's Board. However, the Board does support the section of HB 992 that eliminates the quorum requirement.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation, and we look forward to continuing a productive relationship with both chambers of the General Assembly, and greatly value the input of our members representing both the House of Delegates and the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Burke".

Mary Burke
Chair, MET Board of Trustees