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February 16, 2022

House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Kumar P. Barve, Vice-Chairman Dana Stein, and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Support for HB0649 – Environment - Discharge Permits – Inspection and Administrative Continuations

I am writing on behalf of the Friends of Herring Run Parks, Inc., a non-profit that works to preserve, protect, restore, and promote Herring Run Park and its stream valley for the benefit of present and future generations.

The current system which depends on self-reporting of discharge violations, and the current staffing of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), are not adequate to protect the Herring Run Watershed and the people who enjoy its waters.

Our position is based on years of experience with the property at 4300 Shannon Drive in Baltimore that we call "Mt. Dirt". It operates under Industrial Planned Development Ordinance # 99-415, passed in 1999, that allows for a limited rock crushing operation, no more than four times a year, 15 days at a time, with tarpaulin-covered piles no more than 10 feet high. Instead, it has operated as a year-round illegal land fill that now towers over 120 feet above Herring Run Park which runs along its border.

For years the residents of nearby Armistead Gardens have been showered with dust blown off of this site with any strong wind. We have witnessed rockslides from Mt. Dirt that have destroyed the protective silt skirt around the perimeter and clogged Armistead Run, a tributary to the Herring Run. We have also witnessed young people on warm days swimming in Herring Run, just downstream from Mt. Dirt.

4300 Shannon Drive is now subject to its third enforcement action (CJ-21-2692) with MDE since 2012. We hope that with passage of HB0649, the stronger fines and greater enforcement capacity will finally bring and keep Mt. Dirt into compliance.

Sincerely,



Kate Scherr-Adams

President

Friends of Herring Run Parks Board of Directors

The Friends of Herring Run Parks, Inc. is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
Donations to Friends of Herring Run Parks, Inc. are tax deductible as allowed by law