



March 2, 2022

Testimony on House Bill 1031
Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs
Maryland the Beautiful Act
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable with Amendments

KABOOM! is a national nonprofit that works to end playspace inequity for good. We define playspace inequity as a disproportional lack of access to quality playspaces due to the effects of systemic racism and historic disinvestment in communities across the country.

We work to achieve playspace equity by building kid-designed playspaces in low-income communities of color so kids living in those communities can fully experience the physical, social, and emotional benefits of having access to a playground in their community. For over 20 years, we have partnered with communities lacking quality playspaces to build or improve over 17,000 playspaces serving over 11 million. To date we have built over 40 playspaces in Baltimore alone.

The intent of the Maryland the Beautiful Act is to provide funding to entities whether municipalities, government agencies, NGOs, and other organizations to support land conservation. This can be done through capital improvements and land transfers. HB1031 sets a 30% state land conservation goal by 2030, and 40% by 2040. While conserving land it also incentivizes carbon reduction, and removal of greenhouse gas and carbon in state lands.

While in support of House Bill 1031 and its intention, we shared amendments with the bill sponsor that ensure streamlined and equitable access to funds for qualified NGOs and community organizations. Additionally, we request an ensured a focus on equity and fairness to communities who are underserved, and have had to wrestle with the burden discriminatory land usage, development, and education policies.

For these reasons we urge a favorable vote with amendments on House Bill 1031.

Regards

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