



**FOREVER**  
MARYLAND

***Enhancing and Advancing Land Conservation***

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Date: February 20, 2023  
Bill Number: SB0470 / HB0631 - Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)  
Committee: Senate – Budget & Tax  
House – Environment & Transportation  
Position: Support

Forever Maryland supports, SB0470 / HB0631 introduced for the purpose of setting a new state land preservation goal, creating a rapid response loan fund to allow land trusts to complete land acquisitions toward furthering conservation goals, and support community nonprofits in improving the stewardship and health of lands.

The Maryland the Beautiful Act would create a new statewide conservation goal of conserving 30% of Maryland land by 2030 and 40% of Maryland lands by 2040. In establishing our state goal at 40%, The Maryland the Beautiful Act is an opportunity to establish Maryland, once again, as a leader in land conservation. This goal supports the UN-led international Kuming-Montreal Agreement. It supports and goes one step beyond the 30 by 30 goal established in President Biden’s Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad through The America the Beautiful. Given the states long time commitment to land preservation it is the perfect state to show that an ambitious goal of protecting 40% of our land by 2040 is possible, even in a relatively highly developed state.

This bill seeks to create a Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program and have the program capitalized at \$10 million. This one-time payment would set up a fund, administered by the Maryland Environmental Trust, to help local land trusts rapidly secure priority properties to accelerate private land conservation. After the land is eased, the funds would be paid back to the revolving loan fund program.

Additionally, the bill will create a new program to support long-term stewardship of eased lands. Land trusts are tasked with permanently protecting Maryland’s most important forest lands, agricultural lands, and open spaces. Eased land has a positive impact on climate change by providing multiple nature-based solutions for reduced flooding, carbon sequestration, and the preservation of natural habitat. Land conservation is also a valuable investment toward improving our state’s quality of life, health and the local economy.

Forever Maryland promotes and supports the land and water conservation community, through education, advocacy, and outreach, to permanently protect working landscapes and healthy ecosystems for all.

For further information, please contact the organization’s Program and Policy Director, Josh Hastings, at 410-251-5268 or [Josh@ForeverMaryland.org](mailto:Josh@ForeverMaryland.org).

**FOREVER MARYLAND**

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