

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve  
Chair, Environment and Transportation  
Maryland House of Delegates  
251 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein  
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation  
Maryland House of Delegates  
251 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, I write to urge your support for the Maryland the Beautiful legislation (HB 631), to advance this bill favorably from committee.

NeighborSpace is a land trust that works to enhance the livability of communities inside the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line in Baltimore County by protecting and improving land for small parks, gardens, trails and natural areas, with a focus on communities that are overburdened and have historically been underserved. Each of the 21 sites that NeighborSpace currently conserves has come to us through a request from the community. Urban property is costly and we most often need to acquire the lot in-fee and sometimes on very short notice. A revolving loan fund could allow us to conserve more land in more communities.

The communities we serve are in dire need of more green space, and the grants included in this bill would allow NeighborSpace to better steward the lands we conserve and make a bigger impact on the lives of community members through education and stewardship services.

The Maryland the Beautiful program is a necessary step toward ensuring the long term environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing of the communities in Maryland that need it most, and we strongly urge your support.

Sincerely,



Phyllis Joris  
Executive Director