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BILL NO.: **HB 631**

TITLE: **Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Stein**

COMMITTEE: **Environment and Transportation**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 22, 2023**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 631 – Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act). This legislation would establish the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program to provide loans to land trusts to purchase land for conservation purposes.

Baltimore County is committed to local land conservation efforts, and recognizes that conserving nature and its resources is a shared effort amongst all communities. As communities around the globe are already beginning to suffer the detrimental effects of climate change on local ecosystems, it has become clear that significant investment and effort is required to ensure we continue to enjoy all that nature has to offer. Access to open and green spaces serves a critical function for residents as well. It offers improved quality of life, health outcomes, and recreational spaces for children and families to play outdoors. It is for this reason that Baltimore County has aggressively pursued the acquisition of land with Program Open Space funding.

House Bill 631 would establish the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program. This would fund dedicated partners who work with state and local governments to improve access to nature, incentivize conservation, stabilizing local ecosystems, and sequester carbon emissions. This bill would provide urgent funding to empower partners throughout the state to take action on one of the most important public health crises of our time.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 631. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.