

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH  
*Legislative District 30*  
Anne Arundel County



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 104  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3578 · 301-858-3578  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3578  
Fax 410-841-3156 · 301-858-3156  
Sarah.Elfreth@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee

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Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety,  
Transportation, and Environment

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and  
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area

Chair, Joint Subcommittee on  
Program Open Space/Agricultural  
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 16, 2024

**Testimony in Favor of SB 645**  
**Great Maryland Trails Act**

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 645, the Great Maryland Trails Act, to develop, connect, and promote a network of trails in Maryland.

Last legislative session, I was approached by constituents with the idea to be more strategic - bringing together the various State departments and agencies that have a piece of that work - to create newfound access to the beautiful trails across Maryland by connecting them in a statewide network, mapping the trails and Trail Towns, and promoting their use across the state. Over many months of collaboration with advocates throughout the state, the Great Maryland Trails Act was developed with the intention of establishing an office in the State government dedicated to this work as well as a coalition of State agencies, local governments, and advocacy groups to guide the work of the office.

The language in SB 645 is the launching point from which the final concept will emerge. We continue to work in close partnership with impacted State agencies and advocates to ensure that the final product of the Great Maryland Trails Act is both innovative and implementable, realizing the shared vision for an interconnected trails network in Maryland. These conversations are ongoing, and we anticipate having updated language for the Committee soon.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 645.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sarah Elfreth'.

Senator Sarah Elfreth  
District 30