



March 20, 2019

The Honorable Frederick County Council
Winchester Hall
12 East Church Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Re: Oxon Cove National Park Land Swap

Dear Council President Keegan-Ayer and the Members of the Council:

The Smarter Growth Alliance for Frederick County is a coalition of local and state organizations representing approximately 16,000 members and supporters in Frederick County. We work to engage residents and policymakers in support of wise land use that values our rural landscapes, protects our natural resources, and builds on the unique character of our towns and cities to ensure a resilient and prosperous future.

We are writing to urge you to oppose the land swap proposed by Governor Hogan whereby 2,841 acres of parkland in Frederick and Washington counties comprising the South Mountain Battlefield and adjoining lands would be turned over to the federal government in exchange for 512 acres of Oxon Cove National Park in Prince George's County.

We are troubled that the land swap was announced and continues to be proposed without any meaningful consultation with local officials, the affected communities or the public. The proposal sets a concerning precedent where state lands could be traded away without any public input or a transparent and open process. We also have questions about the state parkland to be impacted. While it has been reported that the swap would impact South Mountain Battlefield, Gathland State Park, and the Appalachian Trail, the Governor's office has provided no additional details. Finally, the swap would result in a net loss of protected land in our state, which we do not support.

We thank you for your kind consideration of our comments and our request that you oppose the Governor's proposed land swap.

Sincerely,

*Audubon MD-DC • Audubon Society of Central Maryland
Citizens for the Preservation of Middletown Valley • Cleanwater Linganore • Clean Water Action
Climate Change Working Group of Frederick County • Coalition for Smarter Growth • Envision Frederick County
Frederick Zero Waste Alliance • Friends of Frederick County • Maryland League of Conservation Voters
MACS (Multifaith Alliance of Climate Stewards) • Maryland Native Plant Society • Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Potomac Conservancy • Potomac Riverkeeper Network • Preservation Maryland
RALE (Residents Advocating for Land Use and the Environment) • Sierra Club Catoctin Group*

David Curson
Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Maryland-DC

Janice Wiles
Executive Director
Friends of Frederick County

Morgan Lakey
President
Audubon Society of Central Maryland

Karla Raettig
Executive Director
Maryland League of Conservation Voters

Dr. Audrey Scanlan-Teller
Vice President
Central Maryland Heritage League

Kirsten Johnson
President
Maryland Native Plant Society

Elizabeth Bauer
Vice President
Citizens for the Preservation of Middletown
Valley

Caroline Taylor
Executive Director
Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Jennifer Kunze
Maryland Program Organizer
Clean Water Action

Caitlin Wall
MD/DC Policy Director
Potomac Conservancy

Karen Russell
Founder
Climate Change Working Group of Frederick
County

Dean Naujoks
Potomac Riverkeeper
Potomac Riverkeeper Network

Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director
Coalition for Smarter Growth

Kimberly Golden Brandt
Director of Smart Growth Maryland
Preservation Maryland

Jane Weir
Team Member
Concerned Citizens of Middletown

David Barrow
Chairman
Sierra Club Catoctin Group

Patrice Gallagher
Board President
Frederick Zero Waste Alliance