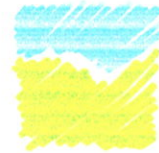


December 5, 2012

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925



PARTNERS *for* **OPEN SPACE**

Dear Governor O'Malley:

On behalf of the Partners for Open Space, I want to acknowledge the role that you have played in supporting Program Open Space in these tough economic times. Without your leadership, these programs would have suffered budget cuts resulting in setbacks to the programs that POS supports.

Partners for Open Space writes to you today in strong support of full funding for Program Open Space in the FY14 Budget. Through Program Open Space, more than 350,000 acres of land across Maryland have been protected, making Maryland a national leader in land conservation. To continue this trend and ensure the sustainability of our natural resources and the multitude of benefits they provide, we must continue to support Program Open Space.

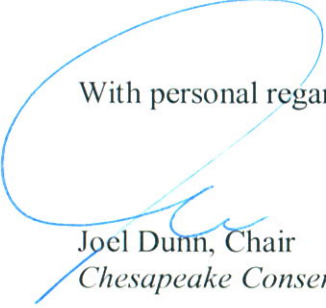
You understand the importance of land conservation to the state of Maryland. Open spaces provide essential ecosystem services, including water quality, wildlife habitat, and air quality, and allow for climate adaptation. These spaces provide active and passive public recreation opportunities to all Marylanders, as well as increase community health and quality of life. Parks and conserved lands also create environmental learning opportunities, protect Maryland's valuable farmland and treasured history, and support tourism.

Research shows that a dollar spent by our state to conserve land for parks or forests generates ten dollars in private spending on tourism, recreation, and retail industries, a 10 to 1 multiplier. Unfortunately, the lands providing these important benefits remain under threat. At current development rates, Maryland is on pace to lose an additional 176,000 acres of forest and 226,000 acres of farmland by 2035.

For these reasons, Partners for Open Space urges you to include full funding in the FY14 budget and the return of funding that has been on hold from previous years for Program Open Space. We also support the state's intention to bring the program back to cash in 2015.

We greatly appreciate your steadfast leadership and support for Program Open Space, providing for the sustainability of Maryland's resources and the health of our communities. We look forward to furthering the state's investment in its future and ask for your continued support of this important program.

With personal regards,


Joel Dunn, Chair
Chesapeake Conservancy

Jim Baird
American Farmland Trust

Alison Prost
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Karla Raettig
*Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Education Fund*

Tom Donlin
Maryland Recreation and Parks Association

Steve Bunker
The Nature Conservancy

Dru Schmidt-Perkins
1000 Friends of Maryland

Ann Jones
Baltimore County Land Trust Alliance

John Byrd
MACo Recreation and Park Affiliate

Kelly Carneal
Maryland Agricultural Resource Council

Bill Crouch
The Conservation Fund

Kent Whitehead
The Trust for Public Land

cc: The Honorable Anthony G. Brown, Lieutenant Governor
The Honorable Michael Miller, President of the Maryland Senate
The Honorable Michael Busch, Speaker of House of Delegates
John Griffin, Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources