



PARTNERS *for* OPEN SPACE

10 Current Reasons Why Program Open Space Funds Must Not Be Transferred -- Especially Now

1. **JANUARY 2021 POLL OF MARYLAND VOTERS**¹ showed that Program Open Space has a 90% approval rating and more than 3 in 5 voters are opposed to using the dedicated funds for a purpose other than Program Open Space.
2. **CRITICAL MAINTENANCE NOW** - Local and state parks were overwhelmed and highly damaged due to COVID-19. An estimated \$41M is needed for *immediate* critical maintenance.
3. **PREVIOUS DEFERMENTS**² have led to a backlog of needed local and state park projects. According to a 2016 DLS report, more than \$1 billion has already been transferred from this dedicated funding source and projects are just waiting on legal review.
4. **CLIMATE RESILIENCE**³ - The Rural Legacy Program not only helps save critical habitat, but is also used to better manage the lands greatly impacted by the effects of climate change.
5. **THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AGREEMENT GOALS.** Conserved properties help meet Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals & more. Managed lands often support wildlife habitat, resource-based industries, water quality improvements, access to outdoors, and more. Best Management Practices increase soil health and reduce nutrient loading to the Bay and local tributaries.
6. **SAVING MONEY BY BEING READY** – When dealing with real estate and land projects, you have to be able to move quickly. Program Open Space funds need to be on hand for when a major opportunity or important ecological project (often at the local level) presents itself.
7. **23 COUNTIES HAVE A RURAL LEGACY AREA**⁴ - Maryland land trusts are nonprofits that bring various resources to local landowners and they rely on income of projects in order to survive.
8. **FOOD SECURITY** starts with local farms. The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and Rural Legacy programs have provided farmers with capital to improve their operations, preserve their farms, and to produce new agricultural products.
9. **MATCHING FUNDS GET PROJECTS DONE** – Projects typically only happen if matched with other funds. Program Open Space is a significant state match to local and federal funds.
10. **A SPIKE IN SUICIDE & MENTAL ILLNESS DUE TO COVID-19** – The pandemic has led to dramatic increases in suicide and overall mental illness. Open space is now being prescribed by doctors as an important remedy to feelings of great anxiety and despair.

¹ <https://forevermaryland.org/open-space-poll>

² <https://docplayer.net/21994233-Program-open-space-early-session-briefing.html>

³ https://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/Documents/MARCH-2016_MDCoastalResiliencyAssessment.pdf

⁴ <https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/RuralLegacy/home.aspx>