

**PARTNERS for
OPEN SPACE**

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**Chesapeake
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**Eastern Shore Land
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STATEMENT: January 21, 2021

Partners for Open Space Applauds Gov. Hogan's FY 2022 Budget for State of Maryland

Annapolis, Md. – This week, Governor Larry Hogan released his Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 state budget which provides significant funding for programs supporting parks, agriculture, conservation, and historic preservation in Maryland.

The Governor's budget would provide full funding for Program Open Space and other conservation and preservation programs that are funded through the state's real estate transfer tax, a program established by the General Assembly in 1969.

Program Open Space and related programs (the Rural Legacy Program, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation) conserve state and local parks, preserve agricultural and natural lands, protect historic sites, promote heritage tourism, and provide playgrounds, ball fields, trails and other recreational opportunities for the benefit of all Maryland residents and visitors. Collectively, these programs have helped to permanently protect more than 800,000 acres of land across the state. In addition, more than 6,000 individual grants for parks and recreation projects have been awarded locally.

Charlotte Davis, co-chair of the Partners for Open Space, issued the following statement in response to Governor Hogan's proposed budget for FY 22:

“The Partners for Open Space applaud Governor Hogan’s conservation leadership, as reflected in his proposed FY22 budget for the state of Maryland. The past year’s global health pandemic has been devastating for public health and for the health of our economy. During this time, parks and open space all across the state, from the City of Baltimore to Garrett County, from Rockville to Havre de Grace, from Bowie to Ocean City, have provided critical infrastructure allowing Marylanders to safely recreate for health while enjoying our state’s great natural beauty.

“Outdoor recreation is an economic driver in Maryland, adding more than \$7 billion in value to Maryland’s economy in 2019 and employing nearly 90,000 people. With back to back record years in state park visitation – 14 million visitors in 2019 and more than 17 million visitors in 2020 – Program Open Space lays the very foundation of our open space infrastructure supporting Maryland public health, environmental health and environmental justice, and local economies.

“Open space and parks are more important than ever, for the health of Marylanders and for our environment. Full funding for Program Open Space will ensure that we can meet the growing demand for parks and open space and that Maryland and its counties can continue to provide opportunities to get outside and safely recreate for all Marylanders.

“The Partners for Open Space thank Governor Hogan for supporting Program Open Space in his proposed FY22 budget, and we urge the General Assembly to maintain this critical funding for the health and wellbeing of Marylanders, our environment, and our economy.”

To learn more, please visit www.partnersforopenspace.org