Committee: Environment and Transportation  
Testimony on: HB1140 – “Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Included Areas”  
Position: Oppose  
Hearing Date: March 8, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes HB1140 “Port of Deposit State Historical Park - Included Areas”. This bill would take the historic waterfront Tome School land out of the Port of Deposit Historical Park. The Park was established last year with the enactment of the Maryland parks bill – the Great Maryland Outdoors Act (Senate Bill 541). The Sierra Club Maryland was a strong proponent of that bill through testimony and advocacy.

The Park has energized the town and is considered beneficial to the local community through ecotourism.¹ Community meetings and plans such as an environmental mural are underway.

In addition, Northern Map Turtles are listed as endangered in Maryland², and population estimates in a biology journal suggest a maximum of about 250–300 adults between the Pennsylvania state line and the mouth of the Susquehanna River.³ With such a small total

¹ https://www.cecildaily.com/news/del-hornberger-explains-port-of-deposit-state-park/article_1f13a0be-7174-5d1f-864c-8c08ed6147db.html  

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.
population, successful reproduction of the turtles is critical, and Port of Deposit is a nesting site. It would be a huge loss to the state if this endangered species were harmed.

Due to the economic, historical, and environmental importance of the site, we urge maintaining the intent of the Parks bill in preserving the waterfront site. Given the human and wildlife benefits, Tome School is more valuable to the state as part of the Port of Deposit Park as originally visualized. We urge an unfavorable report on HB1140.

Lily Fountain
Chair, Natural Places Committee
Lily.Fountain@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org