



Letter supporting litter hotline (HB 1321, an Act concerning Transportation, Littering and Securing Loads on Vehicles, Reporting of Violations and Issuance of Citations)

Sent on March 13, 2010 by the Board of *Friends of Sligo Creek*

On behalf of the Board of Friends of Sligo Creek, I am delighted to provide this letter in support of HB 1321, an Act concerning Transportation, Littering and Securing Loads on Vehicles, Reporting of Violations and Issuance of Citations . We believe that, if enacted, this legislation will reduce litter from the roads and waterways of Maryland and will be greatly appreciated by those who value our parks and streams.

The Friends of Sligo Creek is a volunteer organization that helps look after the creek. Since incorporating in 2002, the Friends of Sligo has been very active in holding events that enhance the natural aspects of the watershed and educate the community to appreciate the stream valley park. We regularly work with the State and Counties, as well as volunteer organizations, to further our mission "to restore the health and water quality, natural habitat, and ecological well-being of the Sligo Creek watershed by bringing neighbors together to build awareness, improve natural habitat, and protect our community's heritage." The Friends of Sligo has been commended for its efforts by Montgomery County and the City of Takoma Park, among other entities.

For eight years we've held "Sweep the Creek" events in Spring and Fall. At each, we typically turn out several hundred volunteers — including home-owners, renters, scouts, school groups, and others — who remove several hundred trash bags of litter and other debris from and around our beloved creek. HB 1321 would make it easier to identify and ticket persons responsible for littering and for operating trucks with improperly covered loads, mainly through the establishment of an online reporting hotline. Litter interferes with the use and enjoyment of our environmental heritage, destroys wetlands, kills or maims aquatic wildlife, and poisons the water. A significant problem with controlling litter is that individuals inclined to litter do not perceive much risk of being detected and penalized. The police alone cannot provide effective enforcement. Please do not let the public continue to be defenseless in this struggle. Give us a way to hold persons who litter accountable for their behavior. Please enact HB 1321 now.

We appreciate your hard work toward useful legislation to control waste and litter. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the public and the environment. I hope you will continue to find a way for Maryland to be at the forefront of States that provide a wonderful place to live by protecting our environment.