



Montgomery County Delegation
Maryland House
c/o
RStreyer@house.state.md.us

From: Friends of Sligo Creek
November 15, 2021

Friends,

As most of you know, we are a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving, and appreciating the ecological health of Sligo Creek Park and its surrounding watershed.

We are working hard to keep the stream clean of litter, measure and address water quality and wildlife issues with active monitors, weed warriors, litter collectors. This is on top of a large cohort of people who use and enjoy the park and the creek. So our legislative concerns shouldn't be a surprise to you:

Litter: It will make a huge difference if plastic bags are eliminated, plastic bottles and cans and glass bottles are given the value or detriment they have in the environment.

1. Eliminate use of plastic bags

We are seeing significantly reduced numbers of plastic bags now there's a fee for their use in grocery stores. But we still see them some in the creek, and to address this, non-compostable plastic bags should be eliminated from use, particularly in grocery and drug stores, and for smaller items.

2. Transition from use of plastic bottles

This will require several steps –

- A. charge a special fee for plastic bottles to help cover the cost of collection and recycling of them, difficult though that be.
- B. Incentivize the use of glass and aluminum containers instead of plastic.
- C. Incentivize use of return bottles by a deposit paid back to consumers when they return the bottles. And facilitate retailers handling the glass, or reusable plastic. We

used to have reusable glass bottles for beer and milk and other things. We can do so again.

3. Ban use of Peat sold by hardware stores, nurseries and used by landscapers

Peat is like coal a non-renewable resource. And its value as carbon sequestrator is only now becoming recognized. There are many alternatives to peat – leaves, compost and mulch, and shredded bark are some renewable, inexpensive and local sources which are much more environmentally friendly.

4. Implement planting of 5 million trees

We applaud the passage of the 5 million trees law. Now we need to make sure it is fully funded and implemented. We're willing to help.

5. 30x30 conservation parity bill

Sponsored previously by Delegates Luedtke & Stein and Senator Elfreth, this bill is focused on the conservation of lands, wetland, and inland waters. It would use a science-based model, locally driven, and sets a goal of protecting 30% of Maryland lands by 2030. To implement it, two programs would be created – an "Urban Legacy" and a "Land Trust Emergency Revolving Loan Fund" - for equitable and accessible conserved greenspace. The "Urban Legacy" program would match the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Rural Legacy program to spur a new era of urban conservation, urban agriculture, and maintained landscapes. This program could be helpful in the semi-urban Sligo Creek watershed.

6. Stop use of artificial turf and plastic playground base

We're playing whack-a-mole now in fighting individual schools and parks as they create new playing fields that are hot, dangerous to use, and dramatically polluting, not to mention short lived and a massive landfill nightmare. Follow the science and outlaw their use in favor of actual turf, and in playgrounds, engineered wood fiber which is ADA approved.

7. Continue to oppose Beltway Lexus Lanes

We are being led to believe that 495 expansion is not happening; we don't believe that. Make sure it doesn't happen. There's no rationale for express toll lanes that benefit only a few and will create an environmental nightmare. The constrained space makes any change a tragedy for Rock Creek and all the parks and creeks abutting 495, particularly when the state refuses to recognize that this major renovation should require complete stormwater retrofits.

We understand the need for a replaced American Legion bridge. And we hope that any 270 expansion will include and be focused on transit options, and more severely limit

tree removal than the current plan, as well as handling all stormwater from the entire surface of the roadbed.

Kit Gage
Advocacy Director
Friends of Sligo Creek
advocacy@fosc.org
www.friendsofsligocreek.org
PO Box 11572
Takoma Park MD 20913