



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Bill: MC/PG 109-23 Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission – Members

Contact: Debra Borden, General Counsel
Jordan Baucum Colbert, Government Affairs Liaison

Date: December 15, 2022

Re: Letter of Information

Dear Chair Julie Palakovich Carr:

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (the “Commission”) has elected not to take a position on this issue at this time. However, the Commission respectfully requests that the Montgomery County Delegation consider this information and include it in the record.

What the Bill Does

The purpose of this bill is to repeal the requirement that not more than three members of the Commission from each county be members of the same political party.

The Commission was established in 1927 to provide regional long-range planning, park acquisition and development. The Commission consists of two planning boards, one for Montgomery and one for Prince George’s, comprised of five members each. The appointment procedures in each county differ slightly, however this proposed bill would apply equally in both counties we serve.

The Commission’s focus on long-range planning, park acquisition and development and in Prince George’s, recreation does not lend itself to any modern iteration of the partisan political divide. Generally, advocates for affordable housing, trails, bike and pedestrian improvements, active urban spaces, and/or smart growth principles can be aligned with any or no political affiliation. While we encourage and appreciate diversity in the Commission and on our Planning Boards, we ask the Montgomery County Delegation to consider the advantages and disadvantages of repealing or sustaining the political affiliations party requirement for Commission members. On one

hand, the current law offers different viewpoints among Board members, while on the other-hand, removing the political party affiliation requirement may offer a modern approach with less political restrictions.

We are also aware that the current law poses practical challenges in the appointment process in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. We welcome the discussion regarding this bill and hope we can be of assistance.