



Partners for Open Space

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For Immediate Release

Press Release

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Statewide Radio Campaign Launched to Halt Diversion of Land Conservation Funds

Radio Advertisements Highlight Importance of Natural Areas for Future Generations

Annapolis, MD – Partners for Open Space launched a statewide radio campaign to call attention to the diversion of \$163 million in land conservation funding in this year's state budget. The radio spot highlights the disappearance of parks and public spaces brought on by the state's chronic use of a dedicated land conservation fund for unrelated programs.

The radio spots will run regularly over the next two weeks on stations covering much of the state. The advertisements will run on the following stations: WFRE-FM 99.9 (Hagerstown/Frederick); WQHQ-FM 104.7, WSBY-FM 98.5 (Salisbury/Ocean City); and WMMX-FM106.5, WBAL-AM 1090 (Baltimore). A copy of the script is attached. To hear the spot **go to www.savemarylandlands.org**.

For the past three years, the Governor and legislature have diverted revenue intended for land conservation to unrelated purposes. The Partners for Open Space advocate for the use of these funds in the way the legislature and people of Maryland originally intended -- for the protection of natural areas, farms and forests for use by generations to come.

"Many Marylanders do not realize the Governor and the state legislature have been diverting dedicated land conservation dollars for the past three years," said Steve Bunker, chairman of the Partners for Open Space. "These ads are designed to raise the public awareness of the fate of Maryland's land conservation programs and the potential loss of recreational opportunities if these diversions are allowed to continue."

A recent statewide poll found that more than three-quarters of Maryland voters support land conservation programs like Program Open Space. Given a description of the program, nine out of 10 survey respondents statewide said they support the program with a 60 percent majority supporting it "strongly." When asked if they would support new laws requiring Program Open Space money to be used solely for conservation and to prevent the Governor and state legislature from using it for any other purpose, 72 percent of Maryland voters polled said yes, with 56 percent supporting it strongly.

"We believe every Marylander can relate to the boy in the radio ad who is just looking for an open space to play baseball," added Denise Schlener with Trust for Public Land. "Without funding and without safeguards on the sale of our public lands, millions of kids in Maryland could suffer the same fate as the boy in the ad who is forced to trade his baseball mitt for video games."

Partners for Open Space is a statewide coalition of groups seeking to secure, save, and protect Maryland's land conservation programs. The 100-plus member coalition represents hundreds of thousands of Marylanders and includes a wide range of groups led by The Nature Conservancy, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Maryland Recreation and Parks Association, Maryland League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, 1000 Friends of Maryland, Trust for Public Land, and American Farmland Trust.

Partners for Open Space does not endorse, support or oppose candidates for public office.

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Current Members of the Partners for Open Space Include:

1000 Friends of Maryland	Maryland League of Conservation Voters
American Chestnut Land Trust	Maryland Ornithological Society
American Farmland Trust	Maryland Recreation and Parks Association
Annapolis Conservancy Board	MaryPIRG
Appalachian Mountain Club, DC Chapter	Mid-Maryland Land Trust Association
Assateague Coastal Trust	National Parks Conservation Association
Audubon Naturalist Society	National Recreation and Park Association
Baltimore Alliance for Great Urban Parks - BAGUP	North County Land Trust
Baltimore City League of Environmental Voters	North County Preservation, Inc.
Baltimore Regional Partnership	Oliver Beach Improvement Association, Inc.
Bay Ridge Trust	Park and Resources Conservation Foundation
Bowleys Quarters Improvement Association, Inc.	Parks and People Foundation
Chapman Forest Foundation	Patapsco Riverkeeper
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Patuxent Conservation Corps
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage	Patuxent Riverkeeper
Citizens Planning and Housing Association – CPHA	Port Tobacco River Conservancy, Inc.
Clean Energy Communications	Potomac Conservancy
Clean Water Action	Queen Anne's Conservation Association
Cleanup Coalition	Salisbury Advisory Council on Youth Activities
Coalition for Smarter Growth	Salisbury Lacrosse Club
Coalition of Anne Arundel Land Trusts (CAALT)	Save Our County, CA
Delmar Recreation Council	Scenic Maryland, Inc.
Eastern Shore Land Conservancy	Scenic River Land Trust
Eastside Youth Sports Committee	Severn Riverkeeper
Edible Chesapeake	Sharptown Recreation Council
Environmental Defense	Sierra Club – Maryland Chapter
F.A.R.M. – For a Rural Montgomery	Solutions Not Sprawl
Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland	Southern Calvert Land Trust
Friends of Frederick County	The Conservation Fund
Friends of Harford, Inc.	The Friends of Patterson Park
Friends of Recreation and Parks, Wicomico County	The Harford Land Trust
Friends of the Patapsco Valley & Heritage Greenway	The Nature Conservancy
Fruitland Recreation Commission	The Valleys Planning Council, Inc.
Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc.	The Wilderness Society
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy	Trust for Public Land
Harford Bird Club	Waterkeeper Alliance – Chesapeake Program
Herring Run Watershed Association	Westside Community Center Advisory Council
Jones Falls Watershed Association	Wicomico Co. Slow Pitch Women's Slow Pitch Softball
Joppa/Joppatowne Community Council	Wicomico County Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism
Land Preservation Trust	Wicomico County Junior Girls Softball Federation
Magothy River Land Trust	Wicomico County Soccer Federation
Mardela Recreation Council	Wicomico Equestrian Board
Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement & Conservation	Wicomico Men's Slow Pitch League
Maryland Conservation Council	
Maryland Land Trust Alliance	

Flying Brick Radio

Radio Copy

ANNCR : I'm standing in one of Maryland's most beautiful parks, a great place for us to play, swim, camp and fish.

SFX*: Kids laughing and playing, birds tweeting.

KID: Okay, first base is the tree, second base is the rock, third base is the log.

ANNCR: But it may not be this way long. The governor has tried to sell public land to developers behind your back.

SFX: Jackhammers, tools

KID: Okay, first base is the shovel, second base is the truck, third base is the hard hat.

ANNCR: And this year politicians are diverting 75% of dedicated land conservation funds to unrelated programs.

SFX: More building sounds

KID: Okay, first base is the bulldozer, second base is the pipe, third base is the stop sign.

ANNCR: Don't let the politicians sell out Maryland's parks and natural spaces. Go to savemarylandlands.org, that's savemarylandlands.org.

KID: First base is the gas station, second base is the convenience store, third base is the bank. Uh, forget it. Let's just go play video games.

ANNCR: This message was brought to you by Partners for Open Space.

* SFX – Sound Effects