

SUPPORT HB2306

CREATES NEW STATE PARK IN LOUDOUN COUNTY AT JAMES MONROE'S OAK HILL

Bill Patron: Del. Alfonso Lopez

OVERVIEW:

This bill authorizes the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to accept the approximately 1,240 acres known as James Monroe's Oak Hill, in Loudoun County for the purpose of establishing and operating a new state park.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- A recently completed feasibility study concluded that **“Oak Hill represents a tremendous opportunity as a new state park that combines a landscape embodying a broad spectrum of Virginia’s histories, with much-needed outdoor recreation access. Located near a major population center and supported by a wide array of community partners, the property’s exceptionally well-maintained historic structures and landscape will require minimal investment to open to the public and provide opportunities for significant on-site revenue generation to support its operations from day one.”**
- **Protect the last surviving privately-held, founding-era, presidential home.** Preserving the home of Mr. Monroe as a state park would be one of the most significant preservation actions of America's 250th.
- **Creates a new, 1200+ acre state park in an area identified as having a high need for outdoor recreation facilities.** According to the study, “Conserving Oak Hill’s roughly 1,200 acres may well be the last viable opportunity to secure public open space of this size and significance in Northern Virginia.”
- **The proponents of this project have heard the concerns from the General Assembly about the costs of operating state parks and addressed them by securing nearly \$42M of non-General Funds toward the acquisition, activation, and operating costs of the park.** These funds have been allocated to this project by Loudoun County, stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund, Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, private fundraising, and an allocation of funding already dedicated to the acquisition of state parkland. These funds will support the purchase of the property, some start-up costs, and a management fund of \$20M which is expected to generate at least \$1M in annual revenue.
- Per the study, an initial \$20M of startup funds would establish an Oak Hill Management Fund, to be stewarded by a local community foundation to cover operating costs. **Expenditure and revenue projections include:**
 - Average operating cost projections = \$1.4M annually across years 1-10.
 - Average capital costs projections = \$1.2M annually years 1-5, and \$1.9M annually years 6-10.
 - **Average annual revenue is projected at \$2.8M by year three, building to an average of \$4.35M in years 6-10. Management Fund balance and cash reserves are projected to exceed \$30M by year five.**



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This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.