

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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February 16, 2023

Commissioners of St. Mary's County
SENT VIA EMAIL

Re: Youth Sports Facilities in St. Mary's County

Dear President Guy and Commissioners:

Concerns from members of our community have been brought to my attention relating to youth baseball and softball in St. Mary's County. These concerns specifically cited County policies regarding the use of lights, field conditions, and additional player costs that nonprofit baseball teams across the county have or will be incurring due to recent changes. As you may be aware, I personally have two children who have played on these fields for their entire lives. I have had the opportunity to watch them and their peers develop as players and people during this time. However, I have also seen first-hand the conditions that many are reaching out about and agree with their assessment that St. Mary's County fields are clearly substandard to other counties in our region.

St. Mary's County has prided itself on being fiscally responsible and our sports facilities have proven to be a strong generator of funds. I cannot understand or see how these increases could or would support the best interests of our families. I would like to request further explanation that I could provide to our constituents on these recent changes and, if possible, clearer guidance on where the increased revenue generated from these increased player fees will be going and how it will benefit our County. Who is maintaining our fields? Far too often, I see parents and volunteers do much of the upkeep of these facilities. Are there scheduled improvements that the County is looking for or requesting additional funding for? Further, is there a sliding scale or another mechanism to limit the effect of these increases based on a family's ability to pay? I know that there have been similar discussions regarding the proposed Lexington Park YMCA facility and believe that it would be appropriate to consider expanding this to all County sports programs.

During my time in the Senate, I have worked to improve sports facilities in District 29 including by securing state funds for past improvements and for a full Stadium Authority study into constructing a Sports Complex in St. Mary's County. This Complex would not only benefit our young athletes but also further economic growth by hosting tournaments and offering a space for families to utilize for other events. This initiative began in 2019 and was only brought up again earlier this week for the Commissioners' consideration after a status inquiry to the Stadium Authority from my office.

I understand that these items are under the purview of the Commissioners. However, I stand willing to offer any support possible from the State level. If I or my office can be of assistance to the county in facilitating a funding request from the State in order to help offset any of these costs so that they will not be passed on to our nonprofit organizations and teams, I would be happy to do so to support for these incredible volunteer organizations that offer the foundation into sports and an opportunity for our youth to develop and grow into homegrown athletes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey