

A recent letter by one of the developers of the so-called Indian Head Science and Technology Park proposed for Bryans Road is seriously misleading (Touting the benefits of the science and technology park, June 30).

The letter incorrectly claims that the proposed site for the industrial park was selected in 1998, the year Maryland saved Chapman Forest to protect its considerable natural and historical resources, and which led to the establishment of Chapman State Park. It is true that when the state purchased Chapman Forest, it agreed to convey 50 acres of the forest to Charles County for economic development. The 50-acre site was chosen because it was relatively flat and had access to Route 224 just outside Bryans Road. In contrast, the 268-acre industrial park now proposed would be more than five times larger. Moreover, it is markedly unsuitable for an industrial park. The site is blanketed with high-quality forest, is about fifty percent stream valley, and is threaded with several branches of one of Mattawoman Creek's finest tributaries that goes on to flow through Chapman Forest. This 268-acre site was decidedly not selected by the state in 1998.

The letter also charges that a "key group of environmentalists"—that would be the Chapman Forest Foundation—is reneging on an agreement it made to support the use of the 50-acre parcel. Curiously, this allegation from a developer was also raised at an earlier Town Meeting by Gary Hodge, a member of the current Board of Commissioners. It appears that neither has read the 2005 agreement signed between the Board of Commissioners and the Chapman Forest Foundation. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) clearly acknowledges the sensitivity of the high-quality tributary, to which the 50-acre site drains. Consequently, the agreement focuses on the need for especially effective storm water management to protect the tributary, and commits the county to work with the Foundation to effect this environmental protection for the 50-acre site.

Instead, without consulting with the Chapman Forest Foundation, the County Commissioners entered into a partnership with developers that would build not only on the 50 acres, but an additional 218 acres that overlay the very tributary of concern in the MOU, and would require up to five crossings of its stream-valleys by new access roads. At risk is a Wetland of Special State Concern, hundreds of acres of forest-interior-dwelling habitat, including by proximity acreage in adjacent Chapman State Park, and the especially high-quality tributary of the Mattawoman, one of the few remaining that support spawning activity by ocean dwelling River Herring. If the Chapman Forest Foundation were to support this presently proposed development, it would in fact be violating the terms and spirit of our agreement with the county. It is the present County Commissioners who are violating the intent of the MOU to protect this important tributary.

The present Commissioners' lack of transparency and inability to understand or respect our reason for entering the agreement illuminates what it means to make agreements with the county in good faith. This is unfortunate, because we do support the mission of the naval base in Indian Head, and see locating contractors near the base in Indian Head as a means of revitalizing vacant real estate there while protecting Chapman Forest and Mattawoman Creek. Please read the Chapman Forest Foundation MOU with Charles County at [ChapmanForest.Org](http://ChapmanForest.Org).

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