



April 4, 2025

Charles County Commissioners  
Reuben B. Collins, II, President  
200 Baltimore Street  
LaPlata, MD 20646

Dear President Collins and Members of the Charles County Commission,

As the Executive Director of Native American LifeLines, a Title V Urban Indian Health Program, I write in strong support of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe's request to establish a permanent home at 16816 Country Lane in Waldorf, Maryland—the former Waldorf Nike Battery—for the development of a Cultural Center and Museum.

This is a historic opportunity for the Piscataway Conoy people to reclaim space on their ancestral lands, and for the wider community to engage with the living history of the original people of Southern Maryland. A cultural center at this site would offer a place of healing, education, and continuity—a home where tribal legacy can be preserved and shared.

Native American LifeLines has had the honor of serving the Piscataway Conoy through medical, behavioral health, and dental care. We understand that wellness is not just physical—it is also emotional, spiritual, and cultural. Being able to see oneself reflected in one's homeland is essential to well-being. Too often, the Piscataway Conoy are rendered invisible on lands they have stewarded for generations.

As Luiseño artist Fritz Scholder once observed, “Most minorities have a homeland somewhere... The Indian has a homeland that is possessed by another, dominant culture. This has, psychologically, very strange ramifications.” Returning this site to tribal stewardship allows the Piscataway Conoy to be seen and heard in their own words and on their own terms.

I urge the Charles County Commissioners to support the return of this site to the Piscataway Conoy Tribal Council under the leadership of Chairman Francis Gray. This act would not only recognize a rightful relationship to land but would stand as a lasting commitment to justice, equity, and Native presence in our collective future.

Sincerely,

  
Kerry Hawk Lessard, MAA  
Executive Director