

Date: 19 January 2016

Subject: Howard County Citizens Association Supports CB52

The Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA supports CB52 and commends the County Executive and Councilman Fox for introducing this Bill. From what we see, this Bill in no way decreases the focus of attempting to protect one of our most precious commodities the Chesapeake Bay. It does not take away the goal of watershed protection.

Too often we have a tendency to be ready to criticize and sometimes this is because of politics. This Bill is not about the Democrats, the Republicans, Independents or any other party affiliation. It is simply about doing the right thing. We need to trust our elected officials for attempting to act on a measure that is beneficial while at the same time not harmful to the environment.

We are especially optimistic when one reads the contents of the Bill on page 1, lines 8 thru 25 that the intent is not harmful to one's health. When one reads the contents it is indeed very encouraging and well drafted as it states the following:

WHEREAS, the County has a plan to maintain funding for the Watershed Protection and Restoration program and is able to continue to finance the stormwater remediation work required under our federally mandated National Pollution Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System ("MS4") Permit (the "Permit"); and

WHEREAS, the County will continue to implement the numerous programs required by the Permit, including the development of restoration plans that will identify projects to treat untreated impervious acreage; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive believes that the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee, as enacted by the County Council through passage of Council Bill No. 8-2013, is an excessive burden on the residents and businesses, especially small businesses, of Howard County; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive is confident that the County will continue to exercise fiscal prudence in selecting projects to pursue, as well as utilize innovative practices, in an overarching strategy to address requirements that the federally mandated Permit has on the County.

HCCA is encouraged when looking at page 3 of the Bill because it clearly states the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fund shall only be used for its sole purpose of ensuring only this subject is covered. So it is essentially no harm – no foul.

We are further encouraged because the rates currently being paid by both residents and businesses will be decreased. We should trust the Watershed Protection Act that it will not deteriorate because of the passing of this Bill. It is only controversial if you make it that way! HCCA is hopeful and sees no reason why the County Council should not pass this Bill. We are asking for you to work as a team in full cooperation to do the right thing and pass this Bill.

Thank You,

Stu Kohn
HCCA, President