



**Howard County Citizens Association**

*Since 1961...*

*The Voice Of The People of Howard County*

Date: 22 January 2019

**Subject: HCCA support Council Bill 4- 2019 to remove Necessary Disturbance from the county code section 16.116.**

The Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA supports the amendments to the code to remove the *Necessary Disturbance* clause in the section of the code labeled Protection of wetlands, streams, and steep slopes. Line 22 on page 1 to line 18 on page 2 step through a number of setbacks from streams, wetlands and minimal disturbance on slopes to curtail intrusion on these sensitive areas. The Code as amended by this bill is strengthened as an environmental law to preserve the identified areas without compromise.

Necessary Disturbance created opportunities to take exceptions to accommodate development in these areas as deemed by the Department of Planning and Zoning. Instead this exception permits a given area to allow certain projects to move ahead if it is declared not too intrusive to wetlands How often has this clause undermined the intent of the code? Refer to Lines 3 through 6 on page 3 which states that achieving maximum density is not an acceptable justification to encroach on sensitive areas. If density is not the objective then what criteria would there be to push the boundary for a site plan which does not fit. This Bill will help clarify what can and cannot be done on property bordering these areas. We thank Councilwoman Walsh for having the wherewithal to propose this Bill to ensure the environment is better protected for us all.

Amendments to include rivers not buffered by wetlands would be a welcome improvement to the code to provide further protects the watershed and the bay.

We are very appreciative that both CB3 and 4 are being introduced by Councilwoman Walsh. We say this not only because of the validity of these Bills, but also because she is not giving the excuse of we have to wait until the anticipated Development Regulation Assessment code re-write is completed which is estimated to be two to three years away. Common sense Bills should not be delayed.

HCCA urges the Council to show your full support of protecting our environment. The passage of CB4-2019 will indeed show your constituents that the environment is a priority.

Howard Johnson  
HCCA Board of Directors