



Date: September 19, 2022.

Subject: **CB 51-2022**

Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT by Howard County Citizens Association

Good evening, Council Members. I am Alan Schneider of Clarksville, speaking for HCCA. The Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA, thanks Council Member David Yungmann for introducing CB 51-2022 to require consultation with an attorney for advice before any determination by the custodian that there is a legal basis for withholding the public record, in part or in its entirety.

CB 51 promotes consistency and transparency; however, an AMENDMENT is needed.

AMENDING the bill is necessary.

Replace “the Office of Law” with “the Office of the Attorney General”.

- a. The Office of the Attorney General has expertise that will ensure conformity and consistency with the interpretation and application of the Maryland Public Information Act. This Office has readily available access to Maryland decisions and previously recorded questions and answers. They will be efficient and a matter of normal routine for the Office of the Attorney General.
- b. The Office of Law is overworked, understaffed and reports to the County Executive. It would be a burden to the Office of Law. Advice from the Office of Law would raise the perception of incomplete, inaccurate, and potentially biased influence by existing or potential relationships.

CB 51 is a positive step for an improved Public Information Act process. Your vote of APPROVAL would be appreciated.

Please AMEND the bill as requested to facilitate consistency and conformity in the use of any denial.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alan Schneider
HCCA Board Member