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February 12, 2020

Chairman Guy Guzzone

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

3 West

Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

On behalf of the Southern Maryland Association of Realtors®, representing 1,800 business and professional members with the mission to advocate on behalf of 160,000 Southern Maryland property owners, we respectfully submit our opposition to HB345/SB431, Charles County- Tax Increment Financing and Special Taxing Districts. Our volunteer legislative committee has reviewed the proposed changes and has several concerns with the additional proposed uses of a special taxing district.

These districts have historically been administered to support infrastructure needs for a specific boundary or community. For example, specific to our geographic region, this has meant supporting unforeseen stormwater waste management or septic issues. This legislation not only would support the building of a convention center with the additional tax, unspecified in location, it then supports the ongoing maintenance and the marketing of such a center. The legislation is not specific to where this center(s) would be planned, and it has an enduring and likely long-lasting time frame for an additional special tax most property owners cannot plan for when purchasing or renting homes. Special taxing districts to create a revenue stream for economic development plans to manage and bring tourists to a convention center should not be an additional burden to property owners in Charles County, who already pay one of the highest property taxes in the state of Maryland.



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As we know, housing affordability has become a real issue in Charles County and we believe an overreaching tax district would only worsen the current status of affordability to Charles County owners and future residents. For such an important issue including future projects and additional taxes, we would hope this is something Charles County residents would be given an opportunity to weigh in on at a future public hearing.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact SMAR Vice President, Government Affairs, Theresa Kuhns at (301) 274-4406. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Chris Hill

President, Board of Directors

Southern Maryland Association of Realtors®

CC: Charles County Delegation; House Ways and Means Committee