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STATEMENT
REGARDING HOUSE BILL 1385
TOWN OF MOUNT AIRY – URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY
ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE
MARCH 10, 2020

The Honorable Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

The Town of Mount Airy is seeking the same Urban Renewal Authority that has been granted to 67 other Maryland municipalities over the past 50 years. The Town of Mount Airy views this legislation as likely not to be used in the near future, but would be a tool to be added to its toolbox in the event it was needed.

In Mount Airy, as in other jurisdictions, absentee landlords have properties that have been vacant, abandoned, vandalized and are a blight on the community. Urban Renewal Authority could be used to bring a blighted property owner to the table in order to create a meaningful dialogue on the future of their site. Currently, the requests of the Town to discuss these properties have been ignored for years and in some cases decades.

The content of the requested legislation is only applicable within the confines of the corporate limits of the Town of Mount Airy. The Mayor and Town Council are seeking the Committee's assistance in their attempt to improve the Town of Mount Airy and thus the region by an acquiring this enabling legislation.

The Urban Renewal Authority of House Bill 1385 contains numerous policies and procedures which must be followed. An Urban Renewal Plan must be developed and submitted to the governing body for consideration. The Plan should include, but not be limited to, properties identified as blighted, abandoned, in disrepair or dangerous. After public hearings, review by the local Planning Commission and formal adoption by Resolution, then the staff will be authorized to approach the property owners.

The Town of Mount Airy is in need of this legislation to allow it to work in a meaningful way to convince owners of blighted properties that are impacting neighborhoods and business communities to engage the Town to find solutions to their property issues. Article III Section 61 of the Maryland Constitution requires municipalities to have this authority conferred to it by the General Assembly, as previously noted (see attached).

Therefore, the residents and elected officials of the Town of Mount Airy respectfully request your affirmative vote on HB 1385.

Municipalities with Urban Renewal Authority

Year of Authorization

(MML - 4/07)

1961

Annapolis
Cambridge
Cumberland
Easton
Elkton
Frederick
Frostburg
Hagerstown
Port Deposit
Rockville
Salisbury
Westminster

1963

Aberdeen
Bel Air
Berlin
Centreville
College Park
Crisfield
Glenarden
Havre de Grace
Hyattsville
Laurel
Leonardtown
Mount Rainier
Ocean City
Pocomoke City
Princess Anne
Snow Hill
Westernport

1964

Bowie
Capital Heights
Fairmount Heights

1966

Colmar Manor

1968

Riverdale Park
Seat Pleasant

1969

Morningside

1975

Chestertown
Denton
Federsburg

1977

Oxford
Queen Anne
St. Michael's
Trappe

1978

North Beach
Perryville

1996

Betterton
Cheverly
Taneytown

1998

Bladensburg

1999

District Heights

2002

Capital Heights
Charlestown
Cottage City
Goldsboro
Greensboro
Henderson
Hillsboro
Landover Hills
Marydel
Preston
Ridgely

2004

Sudlersville

2005

Boonsboro

2007

Brookview
Eldorado
Galestown
Hurlock