

Written Testimony – March 5, 2021

House – Environment and Transportation Committee

Good afternoon, Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Dorchester County Council, I respectfully offer its support for House Bill 1194 entitled “Charter and Code Home Rule Counties-County Property Leases-Notice Exemptions.”

This proposed bill amends §10-312(f) of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland entitled “County property; housing projects; franchise; required notice,” as it relates to leases. Under this Section, prior to the leasing of County property, a notice shall be published for three successive weeks in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the County. The notice shall include the terms and compensation to be received to provide the opportunity for objection. The County Council’s concerns about this publication requirement are the potential loss of a tenant due to the lengthy advertising process as well as the costs associated with advertising. Therefore, the County Council is seeking an amendment to this Section to allow Dorchester County to enter into a lease for a term of five years or less, without providing notice of publication for three successive weeks. These types of leases will be placed on an open session agenda for Council’s review and consideration so the public will still have the opportunity to provide comment.

The Dorchester County Council asks that you look favorably upon House Bill 1194.