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Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2022

Ways and Means Committee

House Office Building, Room 131

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

The purpose of this letter is to urge a favorable report for HB508 Property Tax - Constant Yield Tax Rate - Notification Requirement.

As a former Allegany County Commissioner, I have firsthand experience dealing with the public each year regarding the property tax calculation and process spelled out in the Annotated Code of Maryland. This bill simply inserts the word CHANGE and deletes the word INCREASE from the notification required by state law. In our public meeting, after the notification was in the local newspaper, we would have citizens confused due to the notification requirement. Having people upset and worked up over semantics or some arbitrary calculations is not good government, period.

The bill does not in any way hide or mislead the public with this word insertion. Unfortunately, the current notice is not as transparent as possible. If the property rate has changed or remains the same; the word INCREASE must be used in the public notice, but if you actually lower the rate, the word INCREASE must be used. As a Commissioner, we lowered our rate for four years but were required to use the word increase which inferred that we were raising the rate; this was a lie.

We owe the public, who we represent, to make sure we are as transparent as possible.

I urge a favorable report of HB 508 because the words we use in good government policy ensure transparency that is measured by the public who we are accountable too. Inserting CHANGE and removing INCREASE, moves us closer to a notice that is more centered to transparency.

Thank you,

Delegate Mike McKay

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