

JASON C. BUCKEL
Legislative District 1B
Allegany County

CHIEF DEPUTY MINORITY WHIP

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees
Finance Resources
Revenues

Chair
Allegany County House Delegation



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 309
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3404 · 301-858-3404
800-492-7122 Ext. 3404
Fax: 410-841-3484 · 301-858-3484
Jason.Buckel@house.state.md.us

District Office
206 Washington Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
Fax: 301-722-0334

February 18, 2020

**HB 735 -Task Force on the Canal Place Preservation and Development
Authority - Reestablishment**

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh & Members of the Committee:

I have the honor, or perhaps punishment, of serving as the chair of the task force on the Canal Place Preservation and Development Re-authority.

The task force was established by an act of this legislature in 2018 and scheduled to terminate on August 31, 2019. This legislation seeks to reestablish and extend the work of the task force until September 1, 2020.

The reason for the necessity for this reestablishment and continuation of the task forces activities, as well as the nature of making the legislation and emergency bill that would take effect immediately, is that attempting to untangle the complicated real property ownership and fiscal structures of the Canal Place Authority has been more complex than originally perceived.

The Department of General Services was required to complete certain appraisals of various parcels of property owned Canal Place, both comprehensively and individually, and conducted title searches indicating easement and other rights of ways on the subject parcels which may affect or impede their potential transfer to other governmental or private entities. The work associated with these activities took much longer than was originally anticipated.

In addition, Allegany County and the City of Cumberland (where Canal Place is located) has recently undertaken significant efforts to consolidate certain economic development and tourism functions, and the consolidation activities may provide additional opportunities for options for the future of the Canal Place properties and attractions, to the extent that the task force and ultimately the legislature would recommend any changes to the Canal Place Authority.

In this light, it is both necessary and prudent for the legislature to allow for the technical reestablishment and continuation of the task forces activities, and allow the provisions of the bill to go into effect immediately upon passage, so that we may complete the task forces goals by September 2020 in anticipation of offering legislation, if applicable, in the 2021 session.

I would ask for a favorable report on HB 735.