

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH

Legislative District 30

Anne Arundel County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

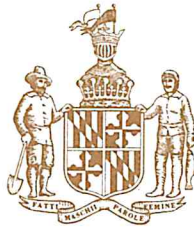
Education, Business and Administration

Chair, Pensions

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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January 22, 2020

Testimony in Favor of SB132

Property Tax - Assessment Reviews - Aids in Reviewing Property

Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 132 once amended. As written, this bill would require, rather than authorize, the State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) to use other sources of information when determining real property value. However, we are working on an amendment with SDAT to accomplish my intent so that the legislation requires SDAT to help facilitate gathering additional information in these property assessment appeals from other Maryland State agencies whenever possible.

This issue came to me from a constituent, Emily Parkhurst, whose testimony the Committee has in writing. Emily's waterfront property on the Mayo peninsula has shrunk from 11 acres to approximately 8 acres over several decades as a result of erosion and increasing sea level rise. When Emily went to contest the last boundary survey, conducted in 1997, she was told she would need to pay for a new land survey. Such surveys are often prohibitively expensive for many Marylanders.

Ironically, my meeting with Emily took place on the same day I spent several hours with the Maryland Critical Area Commission and was briefed on the exciting improvements to Maryland's digital mapping technology. Like Emily, the Commission had been working from hand-drawn maps from the 1970s to determine the 1,000-foot Critical Area boundary. The Commission is nearly finished digitally mapping Maryland's coastline and these maps can and should be used to assist in property appeals when citizens experience erosion - potentially saving taxpayers thousands of dollars.

The intention with this bill, when amended, is simple: require SDAT, upon receiving a real property appeal, to first consult with other State agencies to ensure updated and accurate mapping is utilized. I look forward to working cooperatively with SDAT staff to ensure that the most accurate mapping technology is utilized, State agencies are working collaboratively and efficiently, and Maryland taxpayers aren't on the hook for the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing.

I request a favorable report on SB132 once amended so that we may save Maryland taxpayers time and money.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth".

Sarah Elfreth