

Michael C. O'Connor
Mayor



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FREDERICK

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Chairman Kumar P. Barve
Room 251
House Office Building Annapolis, MD 21401

January 29, 2020

LETTER OF SUPPORT HB0178 REAL PROPERTY – REQUIRED NOTICES FOR CONTRACTS OF SALE – ZONES OF DEWATERING INFLUENCE

Dear Chairman Barve,

The City of Frederick supports HB0178. There are approximately 134 properties in the City of Frederick that lie within the Zone of Dewatering Influence as designated by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) in 2000. When first identified and mapped, property owners received written notification from MDE that their property was in the ZOI. However as of this writing, Maryland SDAT records show 114 of those 135 have transferred at least once. No required notice by owners exists for purchasers of property in the ZOI.

Several sinkholes have occurred in the City of Frederick within the ZOI. At least two of these have impacted residential properties. Last summer, a whole house collapsed into a sinkhole. Fortunately, it was unoccupied at the time. The house next door to the south has become so unstable such that the residents were forced to leave. The house on the other side sits on a parcel in an affordable housing land trust with Habitat for Humanity.

Sinkholes are a real concern in the ZOI. Potential purchasers should have the information about the ZOI to assess it prior to purchase, and to acquire adequate insurance if purchased. A required disclosure to potential purchasers would provide this crucial information.

The City of Frederick urges you to vote in support of HB 0178.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Connor
Mayor