



Charles County Government

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TESTIMONY OF
Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President
County Commissioners of Charles County
BEFORE
House Ways and Means Committee
House Bill 345 – “Charles County – Tax Increment Financing and Special Taxing Districts”
Thursday, February 6, 2020
1:00 p.m.

On behalf of the Charles County Board of Commissioners, I am pleased to provide testimony in support of House Bill 345 entitled, “Charles County - Tax Increment Financing and Special Taxing Districts.” Charles County is proposing an act concerning Special Taxing Districts specifically with regard to the financing of convention centers, conference centers, and visitors’ centers.

The idea of a publicly funded community asset such as a multi-purpose civic center was first conceptualized as a development catalyst in 2010 when the county began its efforts to revitalize downtown Waldorf into a vibrant, transit-oriented, mixed-use, walkable urban community. To further explore this concept, a market and economic analysis funded by the Maryland Stadium Authority was conducted in 2015 and the findings concluded that a meeting and events facility is an expensive proposition to undertake.

In an effort to devise an effective funding and financing strategy, the Charles County Economic Development Department researched the Maryland Tax Increment Financing Act enacted in 1980, which authorized Maryland counties and municipalities to use Tax Increment Financing for the purposes of financing certain development/redevelopment projects.

Several Maryland local governments have used the general provisions of the Tax Increment Financing Act to help support projects, including Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County, and Prince George’s County, among others. Similar to Prince George’s County, which was granted specific authority to use Tax Increment Financing in association with costs of convention

centers, Charles County is also proposing to have the mechanism to fund for a conference center through a Charles County Special Taxing District, if and when it is needed.

We fully understand the complexities and challenges associated with the creation of Tax Increment Financing and other special taxing districts. We will utilize this funding mechanism only when there is a high probability of success.

I support and respectfully urge House Ways and Means Committee to act favorably and pass HB 345 with the suggested amendments proposed by the Charles County Delegation.