



CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Economic Development Department

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TESTIMONY OF
Darréll A. Brown, Esq., Director
Charles County Economic Development Department
On HB 345
BEFORE
House Ways and Means Committee
Thursday, February 6, 2020
1:00 p.m.

On behalf of Charles County Economic Development Department, I am pleased to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 345 entitled, "Charles County - Tax Increment Financing and Special Taxing Districts."

In 2010, Charles County undertook a deliberate and organized effort to revitalize a 300 acre area in downtown Waldorf, Maryland. The area, now referred to as the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor, has required revitalization, reinvestment and redevelopment for a generation. The area comprises disparate land uses, including a former heating oil distribution facility, vacant residential dwelling units, undeveloped lots, automotive businesses, and small neighborhood strip centers. As part of the effort, the Board of County Commissioners set forth a vision for the transformation of an automobile-dependent downtown Waldorf to a transit-oriented, walkable, mixed-use new urban community—a place to live, work and play.

The idea of a publicly funded multi-purpose civic center as a development catalyst was further advanced when a market and economic analysis funded by the Maryland Stadium Authority was prepared in 2015. A key takeaway from the report was to develop a meeting and events facility is an expensive proposition, so the Charles County Economic Development Department set about devising a funding and financing strategy.

As you may know, The Maryland Tax Increment Financing Act, enacted in 1980, authorizes Maryland counties and municipalities to use TIF's for the purposes of financing certain development/redevelopment projects. Under this authority, local governments may issue TIF bonds to finance development or infrastructure to support development. Several Maryland local governments have used the general provisions of the TIF Act to help support projects, including Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County, and Prince George's County, among others.

With that in mind, Charles County proposes this legislation concerning Charles County Special Taxing Districts, concerning the financing of convention centers, conference centers and visitors' centers. Specifically, we propose similar legislation to that contained in House Bill 616, PG 428-07. This provision allows for the financing of the construction and maintenance of meeting and events facilities, as well as the marketing of said facilities. The legislation should apply to all current and future Special Taxing Districts. To be clear, we want to be able to have the same mechanism to fund a conference center that Prince George's County has; if and when-- it's needed.

For all these reasons, I support and respectfully urge the House Ways and Means Committee to act favorably and pass House Bill 345, with the suggested amendments proposed by the Charles County House Delegation.

