



VILLAGE OF NORTH CHEVY CHASE
PO BOX 15887, CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815

April 1, 2021

Senator Paul Pinsky
Committee Chair
Education, Health & Environmental Affairs

Dear Senator Pinsky:

This letter serves to affirm the Village of North Chevy Chase's strong endorsement for HB 272's efforts to require transparency on the part of government agencies to public information requests. The Village was very pleased to see the bill's passage in the House and hopes it receives the same level of support in the Senate.

The Village's support for the bill particularly draws from the challenges our municipality faced when our residents began receiving letters from State Highway Administration in November 2019 notifying them that SHA would be accessing their private property to "complete field research and survey activities" as part of the I-495 & I-270 P3 Program. Upon efforts by Delegate Al Carr to obtain information from SHA on which properties received the letters to better understand the breadth of the survey, SHA hid behind an act meant to protect citizens' personal data and refused to disclose the information. Unfortunately, SHA's actions furthered residents' significant concerns that planning efforts to expand the beltway have been far from transparent.

While the Village is respectful of laws that are intended to protect people's personal data, the Maryland Public Information Act, as currently written, is clearly flawed if it allows government agencies to utilize it as a cover from sharing information that substantially impacts communities. HB 272 is an effort to fix this and ensure that Maryland's government agencies are accountable to the taxpayers which they serve.

Thank you very much for considering this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

Adrian Andreassi

Council Chair, Village of North Chevy Chase

(Additional Council members: Brian Hoffner, Maury Mechanick, Chas Stuart)