



January 19, 2021

**Senate Bill 230**

**Maryland Port Administration - Land  
Acquisition and Payment to Counties**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: OPPOSED**

This departmental bill decreases the number of days (from 90 days to 30 days) a local government has to deny a request made by the Maryland Port Authority (MPA) for approval to purchase or condemn property in the local jurisdiction. The bill also establishes a maximum term of three years for any payment in lieu of tax (PILOT) agreements that MPA and a county may enter into for tax-exempt property. Finally, the bill repeals a requirement that Anne Arundel County must hold a public hearing in order to approve a request by MPA to acquire an interest in land or improvements on land in the county; instead, the county is authorized to do so.

We are concerned that this legislation will hurt County tax payers by limiting the length of time a PILOT maybe in place. We currently have two PILOTs with the Maryland Port Administration.

Additionally, we are opposed to attempts to limit public participation. Our Administration has worked hard to create more opportunities for the public to participate in local government decisions. Our OpenArundel Portal provides insight into the activities of our department to the numerous town halls we hold on any number of subjects. For example, our Charter requires two public forums for the budget – we host seven. This bill will cut off the opportunity for those that are most impacted by the activity to have their voices heard.

Finally, the 30-day timeframe established by the bill for local review of an acquisition will create an impossible administrative burden for the County. Any legislative action to be approved by the County Council necessarily takes time. Our Council meets only twice monthly, giving the Council limited time to discuss and negotiate any proposed acquisition by MPA. Furthermore, the Charter requires public advertisement of any legislation before the Council that would necessarily extend the time needed to act beyond 30 days.

We urge an **UNFAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 230.