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RE: SB254

This is a response in opposition of SB254. Assertions presented do not accurately describe the existing situations. The following are specific objections to the Bill:

1. This bill creates a new bureaucratic structure within DLLR which currently exists within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and would be eliminated.
2. This bill forces non-Home Rule counties to take ownership of swimming pool construction and renovation where they have no training or experience.
3. While filling a void in residential pool oversight, this bill brings nothing new to commercial facilities.
4. References to other safety standards are already included in the existing COMAR 10.17.01 code for pools in Maryland.
5. This bill allows each county to create new requirements as they see fit which would create confusion and disparity across the state; the existing regulations under COMAR require uniformity across the entire state.
6. This bill would add a code that must be updated every three years from a national code. There is an existing partnership in place between the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Maryland Stakeholders to effect best practices as required.
7. The assertions that neighboring states have accepted this are true, but only because these areas had very minimal or no code. Maryland has had a very workable and comprehensive code since 1992 that is constantly being updated by the Department of Health and Maryland Stakeholder committee groups already in place.
8. The "Fiscal and Policy" note which was presented only included as stated Home Rule counties. The impact financially on counties, municipalities, and entire state is grossly understated.

The following are specific objections to the Code itself:

1. As written to be implemented internationally, this code lacks significant detail which provides a much lower bar of safety than COMAR 10.17.01 on commercial facilities.
2. The many codes which are referenced are already included in COMAR 10.17.01 on commercial facilities.
3. Section 12-1203, B, (2) specifically prevents any modification which is more stringent than the code. COMAR 10.17.01 sets a higher level of safety on over 30 items than the proposed code.
4. This document has significant merit for residential pools without opposition because there are currently no uniform standards in place; this is not the case commercially.

In conclusion, this bill attempts to provide a solution where we do not have a problem with the current standards regarding commercial facilities. This bill would have merit if reintroduced to address residential facilities if desired.