



February 22, 2022

**RE: HB 835 – Retail Service Stations – New Construction – Setbacks and Electric Charging Stations**

Dear House Economic Matters Committee Members,

My name is Julian (Blackie) Wills and I am the President and CEO for Dash In Convenience Stores, a Maryland-based company with 41 outlets in the state employing about 800 between these outlets. We are owned by The Wills Group, Inc., a Maryland-based company founded over 95 years ago and I am part of the fourth generation of family leadership for the organization. We have community-based values and donate over \$500,000 annually to our charitable partners including various food banks.

I am writing in opposition to HB 835 for the following reasons:

- The regulation of land use has historically been the responsibility of local municipalities (counties and cities) due to the different dynamics of one jurisdiction compared to another. For this reason local governments have had the authority to enact zoning ordinances to best serve the constituents of their local communities. What works best for counties like Montgomery and Prince George's does not necessarily work best for Somerset and St. Mary's so that is why this has always been left to local governments.
- HB 835 includes the 1,000-foot setback to existing Retail Service Stations. This provision runs risk of reducing competition which could prove negative for consumers. I understand the logic of not wanting to add service stations in areas where customers are already served but many of the existing legacy locations are not going to be redeveloped given these are 20-year investments. Our company is actively working to rejuvenate and modernize our facilities, but many existing locations will continue to age and become less relevant to consumers.
- EV Chargers have a commercial application for the Retail Service station industry but it is not a "one size fits all" approach. Most industry professionals agree that there will be a commercial application for EV charging along interstates and major US highways. However, it is unlikely that rural and some suburban/rural locations will be used for EV charging given the predominance of charging at home or at the office. Furthermore, Level 2 Chargers will be inadequate as it takes approximately 8 hours to get a full charge for a Tesla Model 3. We are beginning to install DC Fast Chargers at sites as that is the only viable option for retail service stations.
- Additionally, it is unreasonable to include 1 EV charger for each fuel dispenser at a location. Some locations may require that due to proximity to an interstate or major U.S. highway but most chargers are going to go unused for the near future. It would instead be better to simply require an EV charger and have the number change over time as EVs become more ubiquitous. This could also lead to challenges in meeting the necessary parking requirements of local governments as part of the approval process.

Thank you for your time and please advise of any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JBWills III', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Julian (Blackie) Wills III

CEO & President

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