



THE COMMISSIONERS OF THURMONT

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Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone:

The Town of Thurmont would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 874, which would establish Community Safety Works as an ongoing program within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Established as a budget initiative within the Department, Community Safety Works has already provided valuable assistance to nonprofit organizations, businesses and local governments through targeted investments in crime prevention that impact community safety.

The Town of Thurmont employs their own police department that currently has nine police officers on staff with four openings at this time. Thurmont is a town of 7,000 and our police department has many needs, and unfortunately without raising taxes on residents, grants are the only option for the much-needed equipment to do their job effectively. Small towns have challenges hiring police recruits as the salary is less than the state or county police departments. Thurmont, fortunately, was awarded The Safety Works Grant in 2022 which made it possible to purchase much needed cameras in vandalism areas such as the park which will aid in deterrence and arrests with the current staff able to see the perpetrators without necessarily being at the scene. Yes, hard to imagine, but small towns have crimes and vandalism too, and these cameras will fill a much-needed void with the police staff not able to operate at full capacity due to the shortage of officers. Thurmont has also used this grant for much needed LED

crosswalk signs for safety for those walking on Thurmont's intown trails. This grant also enabled Thurmont to purchase speed signs to aid in traffic slowing down within the business district. Future funding would assist the Town of Thurmont to purchase more camera equipment, and lighting for high concentrated vandalism areas.

In addition, the State of Maryland has mandated that every police department in the State of Maryland have every officer wear a body camera by 2025. This type of expense without grant resources would result in cuts to other town services budgets, or cuts to the police budget for much needed items in order to be in compliance with the 2025 regulation. The Safety Works Grant was/is a lifeline to Thurmont and to any small town who employs their own police department.

Again, this is to request a favorable report on SB874 to continue this valuable program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Vickie Grinder

Town of Thurmont Economic Development Manager