



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Victoria Venable, Legislative Director

HB 459 – County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act

DATE: March 28, 2023
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
POSITION: Favorable with Amendments
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

On behalf of the Office of the Frederick County Executive, I urge the committee to give HB 459 – County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act a favorable report. This bill gives local governments additional control over costs, quality, and efficiency of their street lighting, providing the opportunity for cost-savings for counties and municipalities.

This bill clarifies the process for municipalities and counties to acquire utility-owned streetlights and establishes fair rules for valuing the lights. This transfer of ownership of streetlights from utilities to local governments has resulted in improved services and lower costs for Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New York, and many other states.

Municipalities in Frederick County have explored the option of purchasing existing lights to accomplish LED conversions and save energy and money. These projects have not come to fruition due to prohibitively high costs set by the utility company. Legislation addressing some of these barriers to local government ownership of streetlights will help us achieve better services at lower costs.

In order to fully address the cost barriers to local governments and realize the benefits of this policy, I urge the committee to amend the bill back to its original language as introduced in the House, requiring local governments to pay “net book value” for the purchases.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 459. On behalf of County Executive Fitzwater and the residents of Frederick County, I urge a favorable report.

Victoria Venable
Legislative Director
Office of the Frederick County Executive