



Maryland Municipal League

The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 24, 2023

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Bill: HB 688 - Municipal Incorporation - County Commissioners or County Council
- Required Approval of Referendum Request

Position: Support

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 688, which provides residents a clear pathway to municipal incorporation in certain circumstances.

Municipal incorporation understandably requires several significant procedural steps along the way to forming a new governing body. Part of the process includes establishing an organizing committee, working with the county liaison, holding public meetings, and developing a municipal charter.

But, after all this work, there is no mechanism that would require a county to allow a referendum of the voters to occur. As such, we have only seen 5 successful municipal corporations since 1954, all of which were already special taxing districts and provided no property tax revenue to their respective county.

HB 688 gives local communities a fighting chance by requiring the county to approve a referendum request at the end of the process if 40% of the area's residents signed the incorporation petition. Registered voters would still have to vote for incorporation via referendum, but they will at least have a the opportunity. We believe this is a reasonable and balanced approach which enables Maryland residents to have a say in their manner of representation.

As such, the League respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 688 with amendments.

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