



**CALVERT COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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*Board of Commissioners*  
Mark C. Cox Sr.  
Catherine M. Grasso  
Earl F. Hance  
Mike Hart  
Todd Ireland

February 17, 2023

The Honorable Senator Melony Griffith, Chair  
Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB0539 – Economic Development – Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland – Membership

Chair Griffith:

The Board of County Commissioners for Calvert County writes to **OPPOSE SB0539** and urge the Committee to publish an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT** so that the three counties can reach an understanding and agreements, where they can be found, prior to your next session.

Some background seems in order since we find no recent record of discussion regarding the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland in this Finance Committee. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland was founded in 1964 as a cooperative planning and development unit for the region that includes Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Each of the three counties currently has equal representation on the Council. This proposed legislation to unbalance the representation of the three partners came as a surprise. It was a surprise not only because it was not discussed previously, but also because it dismantles the collaborative and cooperative nature of the Council that has enabled success in its mission for nearly six decades.

Consider the purpose of the Council to better understand its function in working regional issues that transcend political boundaries to know how this unbalancing is destructive to its mission. The Council's purposes are to: (i) foster the physical, economic, and social development of the region; and (ii) use effectively the assistance provided to the region by the State. To do so, the Council initiates and coordinates complementary plans and projects for the development of human and economic resources of the region as a southern Maryland planning and development unit. Unbalancing the voting welcomes diversion of financial and other resources intended for regional interests to the superpower with elevated voting rights.

The Calvert County Commissioners appreciate the work of the Committee and the short timeline in which you have to consider the needs of the entire State. Given the aggressive timeline of legislative session, we believe we should engage in a conversation with our local partners over the legislative interim to better understand the impetus for this legislation and return with a collaborative plan to move forward for the 2024 session regarding this critical partnership within our region. We look forward to ongoing discussion. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact County Administrator Julian M. Willis at 410-535-1600, extension 2202 or County Attorney John Norris at 410-535-1600, extension 2566. Thank you for your kind consideration of our position regarding this important Bill.

Sincerely,  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl F. Hance".

Earl F. Hance

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Hart".

Mike Hart, Vice President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark C. Cox Sr.".

Mark C. Cox Sr.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine M. Grasso".

Catherine M. Grasso

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd Ireland".

Todd Ireland