



TOWN OF COLMAR MANOR

Mayor Monica Casañas

February 2, 2024

Town Council

Maliek Harding, Ward 1
Irina Hobbs, Ward 2
Keith Brooks, Ward 3
Melinda Mendoza, Ward 4

Clerk-Treasurer

Dan Baden

Town Administrator

Greg Holcomb

Chief of Police

Tracy Stone

Public Works Supervisor

Mike Goroum

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 165, albeit with proposed amendments. While I recognize the importance of timely submission of mandated audits, I believe this bill requires adjustments to address the complex realities faced by municipalities, counties, and taxing districts.

The process of conducting audits is multifaceted and often time-consuming. Numerous factors, including personnel changes, budget constraints, and unforeseen circumstances, can contribute to delays in completing these audits. Mandating penalties for such delays without considering the underlying reasons is unjust and counterproductive.

Implementing penalties such as withholding State aid could disproportionately affect financially challenged communities. This action could have ripple effects, impacting essential services and programs that rely on this funding, thus affecting countless individuals who depend on these services.

Rather than punitive measures, I urge policymakers to focus on providing resources and support to assist municipalities, counties, and taxing districts in meeting their audit requirements in a timely manner. This support could include technical assistance, training programs, or financial aid to address the underlying issues causing delays.

I support House Bill 165 with the following proposed amendments:

1. Removal of police aid as a penalty.
2. Inclusion of an offramp for jurisdictions operating in good faith (plan/status update).
3. Addition of Section (E) (3) allowing provision for municipalities previously in good standing but experiencing extenuating circumstances preventing them from remaining current on filing annual audits.
4. Provision of a grace period allowing counties, municipalities, or special taxing districts to extend to two years if demonstrating good faith efforts.
5. Requirement for submission of documentation demonstrating efforts to return to good standing.
6. Stipulation that if multiple years of audits are missing, good faith efforts to return to good standing will necessitate completing at least one complete audit or providing documentation of audit services in progress by December 31 following the fiscal year's close.
7. Request for increased funding support to the Town Manager Circuit Rider Program, a program that significantly aids small municipalities and addresses core concerns of ensuring compliant, fully functioning local governments.

In conclusion, while I support House Bill 165, I strongly advocate for amendments to address its shortcomings. Let us work collaboratively towards solutions that support and empower communities to fulfill their obligations while ensuring the continued delivery of essential services to all citizens.

“The Little Town that Can”

3701 Lawrence St, Colmar Manor, MD 20722

P (301) 277-4920 | F (301)699-5245 | www.colmarmanor.org

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Casañas". The script is cursive and fluid.

Monica Casañas
Mayor of Colmar Manor
Cc: Greg Holcomb, Town Administrator

"The Little Town that Can"

3701 Lawrence St, Colmar Manor, MD 20722
P (301) 277-4920 | F (301)699-5245 | www.colmarmanor.org