



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov
FAX 410-313-3051

February 15, 2024

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT:** HB 692: Economic Development – County or Municipality
Economic Development Authority – Powers and Use of Proceeds

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and other esteemed Members of the House Ways & Means Committee,

I am pleased to write in support of House Bill 692, and I commend Delegate Qi for sponsoring this important measure. This bill would expand the State's existing Industrial Development Authority (IDA) code to enable counties and municipalities to create revenue and redevelopment authorities with flexible financing tools to invest in communities, especially as it relates to redevelopment of commercial, industrial, and residential areas.

In 2023, Howard County adopted its new General Plan, entitled *HoCo By Design*. This long-range, transformative master plan for our community lays out the strategic vision for how Howard County will develop and grow alongside evolving land use, conservation, economic, environmental, and social conditions over the next 20 years. *HoCo By Design* recognizes the opportunity and necessity of thoughtful redevelopment in Howard County to meet our growing community needs. Likewise, our concurrently adopted Route One Master Plan identifies that the best way to spur redevelopment that implements the recommendations of *HoCo By Design* is to institute a redevelopment authority for the county. House Bill 692 directly aligns with this strategic goal by providing counties with the tools needed to establish redevelopment authorities that can assemble land, provide critical financing, spur positive economic development that benefits our constituents.

Howard County is already evaluating opportunities for targeted redevelopment that prioritizes mixed-use development with a focus on environmental resilience and placemaking. These opportunities include the Gateway Innovation District in Columbia, which is comprised of more than 1,000 acres located in the heart of Howard County. We recently launched a Gateway Master Plan process to envision this area as a regional, connected, and modern destination of mixed-use development. Likewise, Howard County is reimagining the Route One Corridor as a major opportunity for redevelopment that better serves our industrial, commercial, and residential uses. The Route One Corridor is approximately 14,000 acres in size and comprises 8% of Howard County's land area, while hosting approximately 25% of Howard County's jobs due to the heavy concentration of industrial and manufacturing uses along the corridor.



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov
FAX 410-313-3051

As we look to the future, our Route One Master Plan envisions that the Corridor will host vibrant activity centers that foster revitalization, reinvestment, placemaking, and job creation. A public entity with the ability to assemble land, establish financial mechanisms, and facilitate redevelopment is crucial to achieving our shared vision for Route One.

Howard County has already initiated work to advance redevelopment opportunities and new business investment through our partnership with the Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA). HCEDA is a leader in innovative best practices to attract and retain businesses of all sizes to our county, spearheading revitalization efforts of commercial districts throughout the county. The passage of House Bill 692 will further spur these collaborative efforts with HCEDA, ensuring that we continue to grow our tax base, bring new jobs to Maryland, and create places where residents and businesses thrive together.

Howard County will continue to promote initiatives that will expand economic growth and help us be the best place to live, work, play, grow, and thrive for all. I welcome your support and respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 692.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive