



Kent County Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
Championing the Success of our Members

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February 7, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barnes
The Honorable Mark S. Chang
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for HB 736 School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations

Dear members of the House Appropriations Committee,

The Kent County Chamber of Commerce supports House Bill 736, School Construction - Local Cost-Share - Alterations, which would bring greater economic development to our community.

This bill would increase the State of Maryland's share of funding for the construction of a new Kent County Middle School, the building of which is critical for students, families and local businesses.

The public school system of Kent County has five schools: three elementary, one middle, and one high. We closed two schools in the last decade. We haven't built a new school in 50 years. Our student enrollment continues to decline.

We need to bring more economic growth to Kent County and replacing our aging, failing middle school building with a state-of-the-art facility is key to that genesis. Businesses looking to expand to a new locale look at the local school system. Families considering moving to Kent County to work for an existing business look at the local school system.

What both demographics find as a hurdle is the current condition of Kent County Middle School. Every family knows the middle school years are some of the most challenging in a child's life. We need a middle school building that tells prospective families that their children will thrive during those years and receive a top-rate education. For those families of younger children already living here, we need a new middle school building that will keep them here as an asset to grow our economy.

What we have is a building that makes headlines because it closed not once, but three times this school year alone for failing infrastructure, specifically the sewer system and water main.

The tens of millions of dollars that a new school building costs is too much for a county of a little more than 19,000 residents to bear with the state only covering half. We need greater state funding support to help us build a new Kent County Middle School and, by extension, expand our local economy.

Thank you for your consideration and support of HB 736.

Sincerely,
Joseph Goetz
President
Kent County Chamber of Commerce

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