



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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February 5, 2025

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: SB 409: Economic Development – County or Municipality Economic Development Authority – Powers and Use of Proceeds

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. I am pleased to express my strong support for Senate Bill 409, and I commend Senator King for sponsoring this important legislation. This bill modernizes the State's existing Industrial Development Authority (IDA) framework by allowing counties and municipalities to create Redevelopment Authorities (RDAs) with expanded financing tools, enabling strategic investments in economic development, infrastructure, and community revitalization.

In 2023, Howard County adopted its new General Plan, HoCo By Design, a transformative 20-year roadmap for sustainable growth. This plan highlights the critical need for redevelopment to accommodate evolving economic, social, and environmental conditions. Concurrently, Howard County adopted the Route One Master Plan, which identifies the establishment of a redevelopment authority as the most effective mechanism for revitalizing this key economic corridor. Senate Bill 409 aligns with these strategic goals by providing counties with the necessary tools to assemble land, deploy financing mechanisms such as tax increment financing (TIF), and catalyze mixed-use development that supports job creation and economic resilience.

Howard County is already advancing several high-priority redevelopment initiatives, including the Gateway Innovation District, a 1,000-acre business and industrial hub envisioned as a dynamic, mixed-use innovation district. Additionally, the Route One Corridor, which spans 14,000 acres and hosts 25% of Howard County's jobs, is undergoing a major revitalization effort to create vibrant employment centers, attract private investment, and improve livability. The ability to establish a redevelopment authority, as proposed in Senate Bill 409, is critical to executing these plans effectively.

Furthermore, Howard County recently announced its first-ever Enterprise Zone, covering key commercial and industrial areas along Route 1 and Columbia Gateway. This designation unlocks substantial tax benefits to businesses making capital investments and expanding their workforce, driving significant economic growth. Senate Bill 409 would complement these efforts by providing a centralized entity to coordinate redevelopment strategies, facilitate infrastructure investment, and maximize the impact of incentive programs.



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Our ongoing economic development efforts, in partnership with the Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA), are already demonstrating the power of strategic investment. The passage of Senate Bill 409 will strengthen these efforts, providing essential tools to spur revitalization, attract new business investment, and create high-quality jobs.

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. I welcome your support and urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 409.

All the Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Calvin Ball', is written over a horizontal line.

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive