

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President
Michael R. Alderson, Jr., Commissioner
Eric Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

**HB 28 - Constitutional Amendment - Form of County Government –
Requirement to Adopt Charter Home Rule**

LETTER OF INFORMATION

January 24, 2025

Delegate Marc Korman, Chairman
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Korman:

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County last met on January 14, prior to the announcement of the hearing date for **HB 28 - Constitutional Amendment - Form of County Government – Requirement to Adopt Charter Home Rule**. The Commissioners will next meet on the morning of January 28. Regrettably, that leaves the Commissioners unable to vote as a body to take a formal position on this legislation in time to submit written testimony. In lieu of, I am submitting this letter of information conveying their past position on identical legislation.

Last year, the attached letter was unanimously supported by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County. The board's composition has not changed since.

As the Commissioners wrote last year, it has been St. Mary's County's consistent position for years that the form and framework of local governance should be left to local citizens. We thank the General Assembly, as always, for its attention and its consideration of the opinion of St. Mary's County, and Maryland's counties in general, on this and other matters.

Sincerely,

John Sterling Houser

Deputy County Attorney

St. Mary's County Office of the County Attorney

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey
Delegate Matthew Morgan
Delegate Todd Morgan
Delegate Brian Crosby
Commissioner James R. Guy

Commissioner Mike Alderson, Jr.
Commissioner Eric Colvin
Commissioner Michael Hewitt
Commissioner Scott R. Ostrow
David Weiskopf, County Administrator
Buffy Giddens, County Attorney
Bruce Bereano

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**House Bill 81
Constitutional Amendment – Form of County Government –
Requirement to Adopt Charter Home Rule**

OPPOSE

January 30, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman, Chairman
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Korman:

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County **OPPOSE House Bill 81 - Constitutional Amendment – Form of County Government – Requirement to Adopt Charter Home Rule** which will be heard in the Environment and Transportation Committee. This bill would usurp local authority and local preference by forcing all of Maryland's counties – regardless of size and circumstance – to follow one form of government.

A one-size-fits-all approach to the structure of county governments infringes on autonomy and flexibility in local governance. Local decision-makers and local voters are best positioned to know their home county's needs and the best means to address them. Allowing the entire state to choose the form of government for a particular county, regardless of how that county's citizens actually feel, is an unwarranted and troubling assault on local autonomy.

Important to note, St. Mary's Countians previously **voted to oppose a similar, though even less-sweeping, change.** In 2016, our citizens decisively voted in favor of keeping the traditional commissioner form of government when presented the choice to adopt code home rule.

It has been St. Mary's County's consistent position for years that matters of local governance should be left to local citizens. Changes should only come if approved by a local referendum. Accordingly, the Commissioners **OPPOSE** HB 81 - Constitutional Amendment – Form of County Government – Requirement and request an unfavorable report from the Committee.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


James Randy Guy, President

CSMC/AB/sf
T:/Consent/2024/014

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January 30, 2024

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