

TESTIMONY

February 18, 2025

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Bill: HB 768 – Municipal Incorporation - County Commissioners or County Council - Required Approval of Referendum Request

Position: Support

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 768, which provides residents with a clear pathway to municipal incorporation.

Municipal incorporation understandably requires several significant procedural steps along the way to forming a new governing body. Part of the process includes establishing an organizing committee, working with the county liaison, holding public meetings, and developing a municipal charter.

But, after all this work, there is no mechanism that would require a county to allow a referendum of the voters to occur. As such, we have only seen 5 successful municipal corporations since 1954, all of which were already special taxing districts and provided no property tax revenue to their respective counties. No new community has established a municipality in over 70 years.

HB 768 gives local communities a fighting chance by requiring the county to approve a referendum request at the end of the process if 40% of the area's residents signed the incorporation petition. Registered voters would still have to vote for incorporation via referendum, but they will at least have the opportunity. We believe this is a reasonable and balanced approach which enables Maryland residents to have a say in their manner of representation.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests a ***favorable*** report on House Bill 768. For more information, please contact Justin Fiore, Deputy Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs, at justinf@mdmunicipal.org. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

The Maryland Municipal League uses its collective voice to advocate, empower and protect the interests of our 161 local governments members and elevates local leadership, delivers impactful solutions for our communities, and builds an inclusive culture for the 2 million Marylanders we serve.

47 State Circle, Suite 403 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(410) 295-9100 www.mdmunicipal.org