

February 27th

Dear Delegates Korman, Wolek, Woorman, Senators Love, Kagan and Hester:

I am a resident and voting citizen of Montgomery County. I am writing to you to ask you, our representatives, to strongly oppose and reject the proposed Jobs Act, HB 0503 and SB0430. I ask you to oppose these confusing bills for the following reasons:

According to the State Department of Housing and Community Development: Montgomery County has a “local housing infrastructure gap” of 31,364 homes/ to jobs. In the current Federal climate of mass firing, that ratio is a useless number. In fact, the Council of Governments has documented an exodus of 21000 persons leaving the area since 2023. People are leaving because there are no jobs that pay at a middle income level.

Another fact that belies the jobs to housing ratio is the 35,000 approved, un-built dwelling units, according to the Development Pipeline data published by the County Planning Board. These units are already approved and need building permits pulled. If the State Department acknowledged these un-built dwelling units as housing units, the County would not have a “local housing infrastructure gap”.

Counties and municipalities should not be required to upend well-established land use planning, zoning and building regulation processes based on the false premise that those processes have caused housing shortages. The problem is jobs not houses. You don't move to Montgomery County or any jurisdiction in Maryland for a house. You move to the state for a job. We need jobs. Montgomery County's J.O.B.S. Initiative subsidized by \$20,000,000, has produced only 30 jobs in the area since it was introduced 3/4/24. The county and state have to attract business. In this current political climate people are losing jobs which is terrible news with Maryland facing a 3 billion dollar deficit.

The bill puts the onus on the county/municipality to ‘weigh the need for housing’ to close a theoretical ‘local housing infrastructure gap’ over a ‘specific adverse impact’ on the public, health or safety of a project's residents. We have Master Plans in place currently that do this. The bills are confusing and open to wildly differing interpretations. They also represent an additional financial burden on a county or municipality to put in place the bureaucracy to monitor and control these housing project development applications. These bills are poorly written and hard to understand. What is even more difficult to understand is the need for these sweeping edicts that undermine an established order when the state is in great debt and jobs are getting more scarce with each passing day.

I urge you to vote against these proposed measures.

Sincerely,
Patricia D. Johnson
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