



# The Town of Forest Heights POLICE DEPARTMENT

*Anthony N. Rease, Chief of Police*

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Maryland House of Delegates  
Maryland General Assembly  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Opposition to House Bill 682

Dear Honorable Delegates,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 682 on behalf of the Forest Heights Police Department and the community we proudly serve. As Chief of Police, I have overseen the successful implementation of our Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) program for over a year, a program designed to address the escalating crime in the Forest Heights/Oxon Hill area. This bill threatens to undermine vital tools that smaller police departments rely on to protect our communities, particularly as we face shrinking budgets and limited staffing.

Our UAS program has proven to be an invaluable asset in combating the open drug markets, violence, and property crimes plaguing our neighborhoods, specifically at Eastover Shopping Center in Oxon Hill. With these aerial systems, we conduct surveillance of drug transactions, firearms trafficking, and stolen vehicle operations. The intelligence gathered allows us to coordinate effectively with Prince George's County Police to apprehend and prosecute criminals who are terrorizing our residents.

I regularly receive complaints from citizens who are fearful for their safety due to the rise in violent crime and drug activity. The use of UAS enables us to respond more effectively to these concerns by providing real-time surveillance, ensuring that we can intervene quickly and decisively. These systems often respond faster than patrol vehicles and offer critical situational awareness during emergencies, where every second counts. Limiting or restricting their use will hinder our ability to respond to threats swiftly and efficiently, ultimately leading to an increase in crime and diminished public trust in law enforcement.

House Bill 682 would severely restrict our ability to use this technology to gather evidence and conduct thorough investigations. Such limitations will not only hamper law enforcement efforts but also



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embolden criminal activity by stripping departments like ours of the tools necessary to maintain public safety.

I urge you to consider the practical implications of this legislation and its potential to jeopardize the safety and security of communities like Forest Heights and Oxon Hill. I respectfully request that you oppose House Bill 682 and allow law enforcement agencies to continue utilizing UAS technology to protect our residents effectively.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Rease".

Anthony Rease  
Chief of Police