



**CALVERT COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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Board of Commissioners

Mark C. Cox Sr.
Catherine M. Grasso
Earl F. Hance
Mike Hart
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March 6, 2025

The Honorable Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Judiciary Committee
100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB1401 – Calvert County Commissioners - Prohibited Gatherings and Events

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Committee Members:

The Board of County Commissioners for Calvert County writes in **SUPPORT** of **HB1401** and respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** Committee report on this local legislation. This bill seeks to empower the County Commissioners of Calvert County to enact local legislation to preemptively prohibit events or gatherings that present a demonstrable likelihood of generating a public nuisance or disrupting the tranquility of private or public property; essentially 10-acre, one-night festivals on a quarter-acre lot.


Current State law at *Criminal Law Article*, §10-202, proscribes penalties for “keeping a disorderly house.” However, this approach is reactive and has proven inadequate in Calvert County, where the existing misdemeanor penalties—a maximum fine of \$300 and potential imprisonment of up to 10 days—fail to serve as a sufficient deterrent. Furthermore, the anticipation of large-scale events, often held at foreclosed or rental properties, causes significant anxiety among neighboring property owners.

While *Local Government Article*, §13-401, grants the Board of County Commissioners, alongside designated other counties, the authority to abate nuisances, its scope is primarily confined to manufacturing and public health nuisances. This includes, but is not limited to, septic system failures, non-potable water, and the accumulation of refuse that attracts pests and vectors. The absence of clearly defined standards for preemptive measures, coupled with the statute’s focus on health and manufacturing, precludes its effective application to the prevention of disruptive gatherings as envisioned by HB1401.

In summary, HB1401 is essential for the preservation of community safety, peace, and amenity. By conferring upon local authorities the capacity for proactive intervention, we can mitigate the potential for events that pose a substantial risk of disruption, property damage, or public safety hazards. We respectfully solicit your judicious consideration of this important, local request. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact County Administrator Julian M. Willis at 410-535-1600, extension 2202, or Economic Development Director Julie Oberg at 410-535-1600, extension 2485.

Sincerely,


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND



Earl F. Hance, President




Todd Ireland, Vice President



Mark C. Cox Sr.



Catherine M. Grasso



Mike Hart

cc: Calvert County Senators and Delegation