



CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Mark Belton
County Administrator

February 20, 2025

Re: Support for Senate Bill 409 – Economic Development Authority Powers and Use of Proceeds

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chairwoman Wilkins, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Charles County Board of County Commissioners, I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 409, which proposes critical amendments to the Maryland Economic Development statutes. These changes will modernize the capabilities of economic development authorities at the county and municipal levels, enhancing their ability to drive growth and prosperity throughout the state.

Senate Bill 409 offers several forward-thinking provisions that align closely with Charles County's priorities for economic growth, infrastructure development, and community revitalization:

1. **Enhanced Flexibility for Local Authorities:** The bill expands the naming conventions and powers of economic development authorities, enabling them to act more effectively within their jurisdictions. These changes support tailored, localized solutions to complex economic challenges.
2. **Broadening the Scope of Financial Tools:** By authorizing economic development authorities to issue bonds and manage proceeds with greater flexibility, the bill ensures that critical projects—ranging from infrastructure improvements to affordable housing initiatives—can secure the necessary funding.
3. **Advancing Affordable Housing Initiatives:** The inclusion of affordable housing as a priority for development authorities addresses one of the most pressing challenges facing communities today, ensuring that new growth benefits residents across income levels.
4. **Promoting Transit-Oriented Development:** By focusing resources within designated project areas and transit corridors, Senate Bill 409 supports compact, walkable, and efficient communities that align with state and local smart growth principles.
5. **Economic Resilience and Inclusivity:** The bill allows the leveraging of public and private investments to encourage revitalization in underserved and distressed areas, creating opportunities for equitable economic development.

Charles County has experienced the benefits of a proactive economic development approach, and we believe the expanded powers and tools provided by Senate Bill 409 will enhance our ability to attract investment, support workforce growth, and improve the quality of life for our residents.

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We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation. Thank you for your consideration of this vital effort to empower local jurisdictions and strengthen Maryland's economic future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RBC', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President
County Commissioners of Charles County

cc: Charles County Delegation