



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DIVISION OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Lara Fritts, Director

February 18, 2025

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary
State of Maryland – House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB0097 Economic Development - County or Municipal Corporation Economic Development Authority - Powers and Use of Proceeds

Dear Ms. Chairwoman,

As the Director of the Division of Economic Opportunity for Frederick County Government, I am responsible for enhancing the commercial tax base for the County while ensuring good jobs for our residents. As part of this important work efforts are underway for revitalizing traditionally underinvested areas throughout the County, most notably the implementation of the recently adopted South Corridors plan. As the economic driver for the County - our economic development program lacks the financial tools necessary to participate with the private sector in redevelopment to ensure the implementation of this community led plan.

Maryland counties have limited tools to address complex redevelopment and economic development needs. By expanding the uses of funds under the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) language as proposed in HB0097 Counties would be able to accelerate redevelopment, invest in affordable housing, and prepare sites for development with the goal of accelerating economic growth. HB0097 is enabling legislation providing local control to counties of their tax increment within a quasigovernmental entity with oversight of our County Councils who would establish an Authority and project areas. This structure limits risk by containing debt within an Authority and does not back any debt by the full faith and credit of county taxpayers.

Concisely, HB0097 makes changes to the state's IDA code by allowing for name change from industrial development authorities to something more reflective of modern economic development (such as Redevelopment Authority) and broaden the permitted uses of tax increment financing revenues to allow counties across Maryland to fund redevelopment programs that will target investments to underinvested areas of our communities.

In conclusion, I request the esteemed Ways and Means Committee to give HB0097 a favorable report. By empowering our local governments with the tools proposed in HB0097, we can revitalize our communities, accelerate economic growth, and ensure a prosperous future for our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lara Fritts, CECd, FM