

Position Statement on SB1005 From the Montgomery County Planning Board

Bill: SB1005 Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission General Counsel and Powers of Local Planning Boards – Alterations

Position: Oppose

Date: March 24, 2026

Contact: Jordan Baucum Colbert, Senior Government Affairs Analyst

To the Chair, Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Dear Chair Brian Feldman,

The Montgomery County Planning Board has voted to **oppose** this bill.

What the Bill Does. Repealing the requirement that the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission appoint a general counsel; requiring the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Prince George's County Planning Board to appoint legal counsel for Commission operations within each respective county subject to certain requirements; requiring the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Prince George's County Planning Board to exercise direct authority over certain functions within each county; etc.

Montgomery Planning Board General Comments. The Montgomery County Planning Board expresses strong and unequivocal opposition to Senate Bill 1005. We urge the Committee to reject this legislation due to the serious and far-reaching risks it poses to the financial stability, operational integrity, and long-term viability of the bi-county planning framework that has served Maryland residents for nearly a century.

The Montgomery County Planning Board stands by its support for The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and its 5,000 employees. This legislation threatens the agency's financial and operational stability and will have a serious impact on staff, retirees, and taxpayers.

SB1005 is not a minor structural adjustment. It represents a fundamental dismantling of a system that is functioning effectively, efficiently, and in the best interests of both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a nationally recognized model for coordinated regional planning. Its bi-county structure is not only sound – it is essential to delivering consistent, high-quality planning and parks services across county lines.

This bill would destabilize core systems that thousands of employees and retirees depend on, including pension administration, workforce structures, and shared operational functions. It will divert the Planning Boards from their core mission and responsibilities to now directly oversee administrative functions. It introduces uncertainty into areas where stability is critical, and it does so without a clear implementation

plan, without fiscal safeguards, and without addressing the significant administrative and financial burdens it would impose on both counties.

At a time when Montgomery and Prince George's Counties are already facing difficult budget decisions, SB1005 would create new, unfunded liabilities and force both jurisdictions to absorb costs that have not been fully analyzed or justified. The bill risks undermining the very services residents rely on: planning, development review, and parks, by disrupting the systems that support them.

Importantly, these concerns are not limited to the current Board. A number of former Commissioners, including several from Prince George's County, have voiced strong objections to SB1005. Their bipartisan, cross-county perspectives reinforce what we know to be true: the bi-county structure is working and dismantling it would cause more harm than good. In addition, the Montgomery County Council has submitted a letter in opposition to the bill due to the harm it will cause to the Commission.

We value our long-standing partnership with Prince George's County, but on this issue, we must be clear. **SB1005 is not in the best interest of our workforce, our retirees, our taxpayers, or the residents we jointly serve.** The risks are too great, the costs too high, and the consequences too destabilizing.

We urge the Maryland General Assembly to vote against this legislation so that the M-NCPPC can once again focus on its shared mission serving the residents of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

###