Aisha N. Braveboy
County Executive

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 26, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support with Amendment: Senate Bill 1005, *Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission General Counsel and Powers of Local Planning Boards – Alterations*

Dear Chair Feldman:

As the elected County Executives of Montgomery County and Prince George's County, we write today united in support of **Senate Bill 1005, *Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission General Counsel and Powers of Local Planning Boards – Alterations***, with an amendment that adds procurement to the list of functions that are transferred from central services to separate units under the Montgomery County Planning Board and Prince George's County Planning Board, respectively. The bill with this amendment makes commonsense changes to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).

In 1927, the Maryland General Assembly created the M-NCPPC to handle "long-range planning and park acquisition and development" in Montgomery County and Prince George's County. For nearly 100 years the commission has been empowered to address land use, preservation, and urban planning in the two counties and "to acquire, develop, maintain, and administer a regional system of parks in the two counties." We say with great confidence that both of our counties have changed dramatically since 1927, growing and maturing into jurisdictions with over or nearly one million residents each.

Over this time, our park and planning systems have grown tremendously, and the needs of our residents have expanded greatly. The M-NCPPC has evolved over the years to address the continually changing landscape. Each County's Planning Board maintains a discrete budget and runs most park and planning programs separate from the other. Currently, Prince George's County contributes more than double the budget than Montgomery County each year, in part because recreation services in Prince George's County are part of the M-NCPPC, which is not the case in Montgomery County. For FY2026, the adopted operating budgets were \$493 million and \$224 million, respectively.

We call SB 1005 commonsense policy because it folds basic administrative functions, including legal, human resources, and information technology into the respective Planning Boards they support. For the same reason, we ask for an amendment to add the procurement function to the list of functions to which the bill applies. Specifically, on page 3, in line 21, strike "**AND**"; and in line 22, after "**SERVICES**" insert "**; AND (4) PROCUREMENT**". These are the areas that have experienced unnecessary bottlenecks in the bi-county apparatus. These functions should be as close as possible to the programs they support so they can work quickly and efficiently, saving resources and increasing community responsiveness. A park or planning project in Montgomery County should not be held up because of a bureaucratic delay in the Bi-County Legal Department, any more than a project in Prince George's County should be held up because the Bi-County Department of Human Resources took too long to process hiring a candidate. This is common sense.

The M-NCPPC's role in land use, planning, and zoning recommendations and work with developers has played a significant role in shaping how each of our counties has evolved over decades. Too often we and our predecessors have experienced unfounded delays, a deficit of trust, and a lack of transparency in decision making that has soured potential businesses and investors considering moving or expanding to our counties. As elected leaders, we want to ensure accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness.

As County Executives, we need to feel confident that our County Planning Boards are willing partners in our economic development outreach efforts. Senate Bill 1005 gives us such reassurance by allowing each County Planning Board greater empowerment over its own administrative functions.

The timing is especially critical for Prince George's County as it embarks on the largest economic development project in its history with Sphere, which will work tax increment financing (TIF) through the Prince George's County Planning Board. In Montgomery County, the County Council has passed a series of zoning text amendments to expedite the project approval process, indicating its frustration with the inefficiency. Additional delays will cost each County in lost resources and lost opportunities.

For many years, leaders in both Prince George's County and Montgomery County have suggested changes to the M-NCPPC. We are not asking you to dissolve this 99-year partnership. We are asking you to streamline operations so that the current system will work more efficiently and more transparently. The M-NCPPC oversees a large amount of tax revenue and should be more responsive to the needs of the respective counties and the people who live and work there.

Respectfully,

Aisha Braveboy
Prince George's County Executive

Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Executive

cc: Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Prince George's County Delegations
Montgomery County Delegations