

SB 836 Carroll County - District Planning Commissi

Uploaded by: Justin Ready

Position: FAV

JUSTIN READY
Legislative District 5
Carroll County

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—
Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 10, 2026

SB 836 – Carroll County-District Planning Commission-Authorized

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Senate Bill 836 authorizes the Carroll County Commissioners to enact a local law dividing Carroll County into planning districts and to establish district planning commissions within those districts.

Under existing law, the Carroll County Planning Commission is responsible for planning and zoning functions for the entire county, including all incorporated municipalities within the county. There is no statutory authority permitting the County Commissioners to create district-level planning commissions that would serve specific geographic areas or municipalities.

Senate Bill 836 grants the Carroll County Commissioners the authority — but does not require them — to enact a local law that:

- Divides the county into planning districts;
- Establishes district planning commissions;
- Determines the number of districts and their boundaries;
- Provides for the composition, appointment, and terms of members; and
- Allows for the modification or abolishment of those districts if necessary.

Importantly, this bill is permissive in nature. It does not mandate structural change but instead provides flexibility should the County determine that district-level planning is beneficial.

Carroll County continues to experience growth in certain municipalities. For example, communities such as Eldersburg have seen significant development and increasing population pressures. As municipalities grow, their planning needs become more complex and localized.

In many jurisdictions across Maryland, particularly in larger municipalities, local planning commissions exist to allow more tailored development regulations and long-term planning strategies. For instance, the City of Frederick maintains its own planning commission to address its unique growth and land-use needs while coordinating with county authorities.

Providing Carroll County with the option to establish district planning commissions would:

- Allow incorporated municipalities to address localized development concerns more effectively;
- Encourage cooperative planning between districts and the County Planning Commission;
- Improve responsiveness to community-specific infrastructure, zoning, and growth challenges; and
- Maintain County oversight while allowing flexibility in governance structure.

Because Senate Bill 836 merely authorizes local action, it preserves local control. The Carroll County Commissioners would retain discretion over whether to implement districts, how many to create, how they are structured, and whether to abolish them in the future.

Senate Bill 836 is a measured and flexible approach that provides Carroll County with an additional governance tool without imposing mandatory structural change. It modernizes planning authority to better reflect the realities of municipal growth while preserving local discretion.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 836.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB 836 Letter of Support Carroll County -Carroll C

Uploaded by: Justin Ready

Position: FAV

SENATOR JUSTIN READY
SENATE CHAIR

SENATOR CHRIS WEST



DELEGATE CHRIS TOMLINSON
HOUSE CHAIR

DELEGATE CHRISTOPHER ERIC BOUCHAT
DELEGATE APRIL ROSE
DELEGATE JOSHUA STONKO

THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
CARROLL COUNTY DELEGATION

March 10, 2026

Carroll County Delegation Letter of Support

SB 836 – Carroll County-District Planning Commission-Authorized

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SB 836, Carroll County-District Planning Commission-Authorized was voted on at the Carroll County February 6, 2026, delegation meeting. It was approved unanimously 6-0 by the delegation.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Senator Justin Ready in black ink.

Senator Justin Ready

Handwritten signature of Senator Chris West in black ink.

Senator Chris West

Handwritten signature of Delegate Christopher "Eric" Bouchat in blue ink.

Delegate Christopher "Eric" Bouchat

Handwritten signature of Delegate April Rose in blue ink.

Delegate April Rose

Handwritten signature of Delegate Josh Stonko in black ink.

Delegate Josh Stonko

Handwritten signature of Delegate Chris Tomlinson in black ink.

Delegate Chris Tomlinson

Voting sheet SB 836 Carroll County-District Planni

Uploaded by: Justin Ready

Position: FAV

Carroll County Delegation Meeting

Friday, February 6, 2026

Voting on Bill

SB 836 Carroll County-District Planning Commission-Authorized

Sen Ready	Yes	No
Sen West	Yes	No
Del Bouchat	Yes	No
Del Rose	Yes	No
Del Stonko	Yes	No
Del Tomlinson	Yes	No

MBIA Letter of Opposition SB 836.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: UNF

March 4th, 2026

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

RE: MBIA Letter of Opposition SB 836 Carroll County – District Planning Commission – Authorized

Dear Chair Feldman,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB 836 Carroll County – District Planning Commission – Authorized**.

This bill allows Carroll County to create district-level planning commissions within the county, and lays out the processes for appointing members, public hearings, and duties of the members. MBIA is opposed to this bill, as it will create more obstacles to developing housing in Carroll County. For context, the County is currently trying to stop any housing development projects they can. In December, the Commissioners passed deferrals on most development projects in the County's largest growth area, the southeast part of the County. Creating district planning commissions means that developers have to go through another layer of public hearings and approval processes on top of going through the County's planning process. This will significantly delay housing projects even more.

MBIA is also concerned that the County will not have the administrative capacity to support district planning commissions. Additional planning staff, coordination, logistics and planning expertise are all needed for these planning commissions to be successful. Small counties generally do not have the funding to support this, which is why smaller counties in Maryland have centralized county planning departments and not local. Localized planning commissions will also lead to different zoning standards between districts, conflicting growth policies and inconsistent infrastructure planning. This ultimately makes development less predictable and more difficult to plan.

SB836 creates fragmentation, inefficiency, and uncertainty in Carroll County's land-use system. It increases costs, slows housing production, and undermines consistent countywide planning without demonstrating a clear need for change.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB 836 - Carroll County - District Planning Commis

Uploaded by: Tom Ballentine

Position: UNF



March 6, 2026

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

Unfavorable: SB 836 – Carroll County District Planning Commissions - Authorization

Dear, Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the NAIOP Maryland Chapters representing seven hundred companies involved in all aspects of commercial, light-industrial, and mixed-use real estate, I am writing to recommend your unfavorable report on SB 836

Overview of SB 836

Senate Bill 836 authorizes Carroll County to create district planning commissions – smaller sub county planning bodies with the same powers and duties as the county-wide Planning Commission. The County Commissioners are authorized to divide the county into planning districts and appoint district commission members that would have the same planning and zoning authority as the county planning commission.

Rationale for NAIOP's Position

The bill authorizes inconsistent standards across the county and invites hyper-local considerations to undermine comprehensive planning objectives. The bill only requires uniform county-wide administration of zoning *“unless specified otherwise in the district zone regulations.”*

Carroll County is currently using a series of legislated moratoria called development deferrals to halt review of mature development applications for the purpose of materially changing the zoning and development regulations before the projects reach final approval. This recent development represents an unfortunate breakdown and misuse of the county's delegated planning and zoning authority.

SB 836 risks institutionalizing and making permanent this kind of fragmented county planning strategy where development district appointees adopt different zoning philosophies than those of the county-wide planning commission and adopted comprehensive land use plans.

For these reasons, NAIOP respectfully recommends your unfavorable report on SB 836.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Ballentine".

Tom Ballentine, Vice President for Policy
NAIOP – Maryland Chapters, *The Association for Commercial Real Estate*

cc: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members
Nick Manis – Manis, Canning Assoc.