
ROBERT G. CASSILY
Harford County Executive



ROBERT S. McCORD
Director of Administration

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells
Chair, House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Opposition to House Bill 1141 – Municipal Incorporation – Required Approval of Referendum Request

Dear Chairwoman Wells and Committee Members,

On behalf of the citizens of Harford County, I respectfully submit this letter in opposition to House Bill 1141.

Municipal incorporation decisions carry significant consequences for governance, taxation, land use, infrastructure, and public service delivery. For that reason, the General Assembly has historically recognized the importance of allowing local governing bodies to evaluate incorporation proposals carefully and exercise judgment based on the best interests of the broader community.

House Bill 1141 alters that balance by effectively removing the discretion of the county governing body in considering whether a referendum request should proceed. By making approval mandatory once certain criteria are met, the bill converts what should be a deliberative policy decision into a procedural obligation. County councils and boards of commissioners would no longer have meaningful authority to weigh fiscal impacts, service implications, planning consistency, or long-term governance considerations before a referendum moves forward.

Incorporation proposals can affect not only the residents within the proposed boundaries but also neighboring communities and county taxpayers. The county governing body is uniquely positioned to evaluate how such a proposal aligns with comprehensive planning, infrastructure capacity, financial sustainability, and regional coordination. Removing that discretion undermines the role of locally elected officials who are accountable for managing countywide impacts.

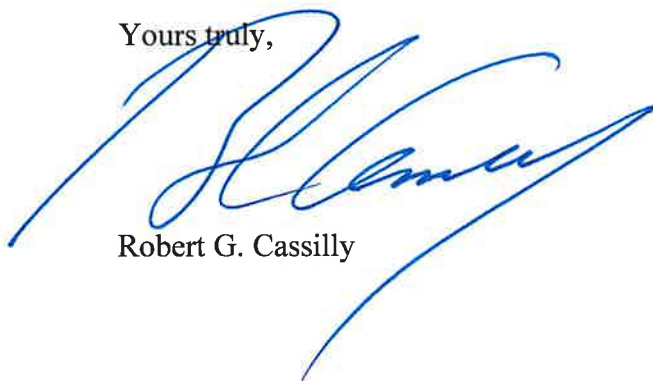
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Harford County believes that decisions of this magnitude require thoughtful review and policy judgment, not automatic approval. Maintaining local discretion ensures that incorporation proposals receive appropriate scrutiny and that all potential consequences are fully considered before advancing to a ballot question.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1141.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Cassilly", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert G. Cassilly