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Washington County

Government, Labor, and  
Elections Committee

*Subcommittees*

Government Operations and Ethics  
Labor

Local Government/Bi-County Agencies  
and Administration

House Study Group on Economic Stability



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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB99: Municipalities - Annexed Land - Land Use and Density**

**Government, Labor, and Elections**

**February 5th, 2026: 2:00 PM**

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee, for the record, I am Delegate Matthew Schindler, and I am here to testify in support of House Bill 99.

House Bill 99 would provide municipalities with greater control over zoning decisions in areas that have been recently annexed. Under current State law, county governments retain final authority to approve or deny a municipality's request to rezone newly annexed land. If express county approval is not granted, a municipality is prohibited from rezoning that land for five years when the proposed zoning differs from the county's authorized use or allows substantially higher density.

In practice, this framework allows annexation approval to be used as a leverage tool—or, at times, a punitive measure—rather than as a planning safeguard. As a result, municipal planning efforts can be stalled, and public-private partnerships become difficult or impossible under restrictive and inflexible timelines that may have little to do with sound land-use planning.

HB 99 refocuses annexation policy on what it should be: ensuring that annexations align with adopted county comprehensive plans. The bill allows the comprehensive plan for land use—whether adopted by the county or the municipality—to guide zoning decisions in annexed areas. Comprehensive plans provide a more detailed, thoughtful, and forward-looking analysis than reliance on county zoning classifications alone, and they are better suited to evaluating appropriate land use after annexation.

County and municipal governments should be partners in growing our economies and strengthening our communities. By removing the ability to use zoning approval as leverage, while still requiring consistency with comprehensive plans, this bill promotes collaboration, predictability, and responsible growth. It also better equips municipalities to pursue economic development, housing opportunities, and community revitalization within their corporate boundaries.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 99.