



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 2, 2026

Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair  
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
251 Taylor House Office Building  
145 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Opposition to House Bill 99—Municipalities—Annexed Land—Land Use  
and Density

Dear Delegate Wells:

The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County (the “Board”) unanimously opposes the passage of HB 99, previously filed in 2025 as HB 751. As currently drafted, HB 99 would modify the Local Government Article by granting municipalities unchecked discretion to use recently annexed property without proper consideration for the County’s needs. The Board opposes this bill for several reasons.

As presently written, Local Government Article § 4-416 requires that newly annexed municipal land may not be developed for uses substantially different than the extant zoning classification for five years, without express approval of county commissioners or the county council. HB 99 seeks to severely undermine that by allowing the municipality to rely on the comprehensive plan of either the “county *or* the municipality.” (Emphasis added).

By using the disjunctive word “or,” HB 99 effectively divests the county of any authority to restrict improper land use recommendations. Instead, municipalities may rely on their own comprehensive plans, thereby disregarding and disrupting carefully contemplated county zoning classifications.

Furthermore, HB 99 contradicts the clear thrust and intention of Local Government Article § 4-416. As written, § 4-416 makes clear that, following annexation, the use of land should comport with its former zoning classification for at least five years unless the county grants its express permission to use the land in a different manner. HB

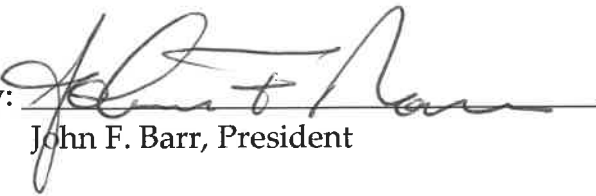
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99 disregards this intended purpose by creating a shortcut for municipalities to, without delay, use the annexed land in a manner that is exclusively self-serving to the municipality.

The Board strongly opposes the passage of HB 99, which would severely undermine a county's ability to maintain zoning and land use stability.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

By:   
John F. Barr, President

cc (via email): Washington County Delegation