



Dear Delegate Wilkins and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Pocomoke City, the Town of Princess Anne, and the City of Crisfield, we write in strong and unified support of House Bill 1142, establishing the Task Force to Modernize County and Municipal Revenue Structures

Maryland's municipal governments serve as the most direct and immediate level of government for residents. We maintain streets and sidewalks, ensure public safety, support small businesses, provide water and sewer infrastructure, and respond to emergencies. Yet despite growing service demands, aging infrastructure, inflationary pressures, and increased state and federal mandates, our revenue structures have remained largely unchanged for decades.

For communities on the Lower Eastern Shore, these structural limitations are particularly acute. Rural municipalities often operate with a narrow tax base, limited commercial density, and constrained flexibility in revenue generation. While our responsibilities continue to expand, our tools for sustaining essential services have not kept pace with modern economic realities.

HB1142 offers an opportunity for a responsible pathway toward modernization rather than piecemeal adjustments. This approach recognizes that sustainable governance requires structural clarity and fairness.

Modernizing municipal revenue structures would allow Lower Shore communities to:

- Invest more strategically in aging infrastructure, including water, sewer, and stormwater systems
- Enhance public safety capacity and emergency response readiness
- Strengthen economic development efforts to attract new businesses and jobs
- Reduce overreliance on property taxes as the primary funding source
- Create more resilient local budgets that can withstand economic fluctuations

Importantly, it creates a collaborative forum; bringing together legislators, state officials, municipal representatives, and county leaders to evaluate long-term sustainability and affordability. That measured approach ensures that any recommendations consider the cost of living, economic competitiveness, and the financial realities faced by Maryland families.

For the Lower Eastern Shore, modernization is not about expansion for its own sake. It is about equity. Municipalities across Maryland face vastly different economic conditions, yet operate under largely uniform fiscal constraints

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 1142.

Sincerely,

Commission President Shelley Johnson (Princess Anne, Md)

Mayor Todd J. Nock (Pocomoke City, Md)

Mayor Darlene Taylor (Crisfield, Md)