



Office of the Mayor
Lajan Cephas Bey, Mayor
410 Academy Street
Cambridge, Maryland 21613

Friday, February 20, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, House of Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Jessica Feldmark
Vice-Chair, House of Ways and Means Committee
Room 130
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of House Bill 1142 Task Force to Modernize County and Municipal Revenue

For far too long, rural counties like Dorchester have been trying to solve 2026 challenges, operating under a mid-20th century revenue framework. That reality creates strain not just for counties, but for municipalities and the residents we serve.

As a result, municipal residents in Cambridge are effectively double taxed. They pay county property taxes, and they also pay city property taxes—to fund services already provided by the City. We are talking about police protection, infrastructure maintenance, planning and zoning, and code enforcement. This duplicated tax falls directly on working families, seniors, and small business owners.

Although Dorchester County has been providing some tax differential to residents in Cambridge and Hurlock, legislatively speaking—they are not required to. Dorchester County is not named as an enumerated county in the Article-Tax-Property Statutes of section 6-305. Leaving an intentional “loophole”, allowing property owners on Maryland’s Eastern Shore vulnerable to double taxation at the discretion of the county. The county attempted this “loophole” last year but failed after community outrage. There are nine counties on Maryland’s Eastern Shore and fifty-six municipalities, all negatively impacted by this aged framework of revenue.

To be clear, Dorchester County is doing the best it can with limited revenue capacity. A significant portion of our county is a natural environmental treasure, federally designated and protected. Sadly, yielding a reduced taxable base.

If we can find additional revenue for our counties, counties are likely to agree to a required tax set-off providing relief to municipal residents of the Eastern Shore. Maryland’s Eastern Shore is falling behind because our systems are not fair, not equitable, not sustainable, nor reflective of today’s realities. Although it is not the “yes and now” that we need—it is movement. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1142.

With gratitude,


Lajan Cephas Bey, Mayor