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4/10/2016

Please vote in favor of Howard County Council Bill 65-2016

Dear County Council,

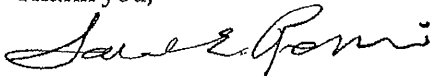
Please vote in favor of Howard County Council Bill 65-2016 to place a nine-month moratorium on certain development permits while a study is conducted on the impact of impervious surface in the Tiber-Hudson watershed, particularly as it concerns the catastrophic flooding of historic Ellicott City in July.

The Tiber-Hudson watershed is one of the most paved watersheds in the state, with well over 25% of it covered in impervious surface. In order to best prevent future flooding events, the county must fully understand the impact of its impervious surface. Furthermore, under the current development review process, Howard County doesn't look at the overall impact of excessive development in the Tiber-Hudson watershed. This bill is essential because, as development slows, it would allow the county time to better plan development to avoid devastating flooding events.

In addition, impervious surface causes higher loads of polluted runoff to flow into local waters. Given progress that the county has made towards reducing polluted runoff—in particular by retaining its stormwater fee—it would be counterproductive for the county not to do more to better understand the impact of its built environment.

I also urge you to consider strengthening the bill to reduce the number of exemptions, and apply the moratorium to the development review process and well as the permitted process, in recognition that some changes may need to be made to new development proposals.

Thank you,



Sarah Rennie