

CMBRS  
JF  
MS

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL  
RECEIVED

2018 OCT 15 AM 10:11



October 12, 2018

Howard County Council  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Dear Members of the Howard County Council:

The Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions (MAHDC) respectfully requests that the County Council consider the ramifications of the bill **CB75-2018** currently pending before the Council, specifically concerning Ellicott City, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and protection from catastrophic flooding.

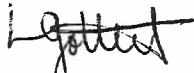
As you are well aware, the HPC is responsible for guiding the protection of the contributing features of the historically and architecturally significant buildings, structures and streetscape of the town. The Commission is an appointed body that meets professional standards of excellence in the evaluation of historic resources and is certified under the Certified Local Government program. MAHDC considers the role of the Howard County Historic Preservation Commission as a decision-making body crucial in maintaining the integrity of Ellicott City's historic district. This bill would require the Commission to approve 'certificates of approval' for demolition and/or alteration of historical structures when a public safety concern is put forward. In this case, the definition of the term 'public safety', as broadly defined in the bill, could potentially limit the HPC's role and lead to undesired outcomes, such as demolition of buildings beyond and including those impacted within the plan put forward by the County Council, rather than finding ways to reduce risk while maintaining historical properties.

The Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions is made up of the representatives of forty-seven Historic Districts and Historic Preservation Commissions around the State of Maryland. Its primary mission is to provide training, program support and advocacy for historic preservation commissions and local governments across the state. MAHDC feels strongly that the preservation and the protection of significant historic sites and districts add value to the quality of life and sense of place of all Marylanders. These unique and irreplaceable assets also have significant economic benefits to individuals and communities. Through this

legislation, a dangerous precedent is set. The role of other HPCs around the state would be negatively compromised with a movement such as this from Howard County.

In light of recognition of the important role of the Howard County Preservation Commission to provide oversight for the heritage of Howard County and to protect its independent nature, MAHDC and our membership request that the Council oppose and vote no on bill **CB75-2018**.

Respectfully submitted,



Leslie L. Gottert, MA  
Executive Director

Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions

P.O. Box 783

Frederick, MD 21705

[www.mahdc.org](http://www.mahdc.org)