

**Office of the County Auditor**  
**Auditor's Analysis**

**Council Bill No. 11-2025 (ZRA-211)**

Introduced: February 3, 2025

Auditor: Rebecca Gold

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Fiscal Impact:

The fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be determined as it is dependent on the need for additional code enforcement activities within the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) for properties in the Planned Employment Campus (PEC) zoning districts.

The DPZ indicated that it was unsure whether this legislation would create an additional workload for its staff. Code enforcement is complaint driven, so the workload associated with enforcement of this legislation would depend on how many violation complaints the department receives.

Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to amend Section 116.0 of the Howard County Zoning Regulations to allow research and development laboratories as a permitted use in PEC zoning districts, excluding those laboratories that produce flue gas and require an air permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

Other Comments:

The DPZ is unaware of any current PEC facilities which would be nonconforming if this legislation passed. According to Section 129.0 of the Howard County Zoning Regulations, nonconforming uses are generally allowed to continue (subject to certain conditions) if the nonconformance had been previously permitted before a Zoning Regulation Amendment went into effect.

The property owner at 7500 Grace Drive in Columbia (W. R. Grace & Co.-Conn.) applied for an air permit from the MDE to install combustion equipment which will produce flue gas.

The Technical Staff Report from November 14, 2024, previously stated there were 185 PEC-zoned properties. The report has been updated to show that there are 166 PEC zoned properties. According to the DPZ, this legislation will apply to all 166 PEC-zoned properties.