



Howard County
Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony and Fiscal Impact Statement
Emergency Act Amending the Howard County Building Code

To: Dr. Opel Jones, Chairperson
Howard County Council

From: Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive

Date: February 2, 2026

PURPOSE

Council Bill No. 16-2026, seeks action to amend the Howard County Building Code in order to require that only a government agency may apply for, obtain, or hold a permit for the Institutional (I-3) Use group. Pursuant to Section 209(d) of the Howard County Charter, this legislation is an Emergency Bill that seeks to address an immediate emergency affecting public health, safety or welfare.

BACKGROUND

An inspection was recently conducted of a privately-owned office building in Elkridge that is currently under renovation for use as detention facility. A third-party permitting company known as McKeever Services, located in Fairfax, VA, has applied for and received a permit to renovate 28,614 square feet within an existing building located at 6522 Meadowridge Road in Elkridge. The building is owned by Genesis GSA Strategic One, LLC. The building permit was issued on August 5, 2025, with the following description of work: "General Services Administration/scope of work includes improvement of tenant spaces support areas, detention facility, detainee processing and secured waiting area."

The work performed under the permit appears to be nearing completion. The most recent inspection was passed with conditions on December 29, 2025. However, certain areas remain to be reinspected and approved prior to issuance of a Use & Occupancy certificate.

The retrofit of private office buildings in Howard County for use of a detention facility raises serious concerns about public health, safety, welfare, and oversight of such facilities. As such, this emergency legislation would restrict the use of privately-owned detention facilities in Howard County as the County determines appropriate.

NATURE OF EMERGENCY

Recent reporting indicates that this building, located at 6522 Meadowridge Road in Elkridge, is intended for use as a privately-owned detention facility.

The creation of privately-owned detention facilities anywhere in our county and state raises serious concerns about public health, safety, welfare, and oversight that must be addressed.

Furthermore, the proposed detention center location in Elkridge sits in an existing office park, in close proximity to healthcare providers, schools, parks, and neighborhoods. The proposed facility is located within a one-mile radius of the following community destinations:

- Deep Run Elementary School
- Mayfield Woods Middle School
- Waterloo Park
- Troy Park
- Timbers at Troy Golf Course
- Gateway Overlook Shopping Center
- Ascension Saint Agnes Primary Care Elkridge
- Tarbiyah Academy
- Howard County Bureau of Highways Mayfield Shop

The siting of such a detention facility in close proximity to these important and critical community locations also raises serious concerns about public health, safety, or welfare.

FISCAL IMPACT

This legislation will not require additional staff to administer and will not result in any anticipated fiscal impact.