



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony on Council Bill No. 3-2015; a Bill reorganizing the Executive Branch to revise the duties and responsibilities and rename the Office of Environmental Sustainability

To: Mary Kay Sigaty,
Council Chairperson

From: Lonnie R. Robbins,
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: February 17, 2015

The above referenced Council Bill reorganizes the Executive Branch of County Government pursuant to Section 403 of the Howard County Charter. The Bill revises the duties and responsibilities of the Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES), and changes its name to the Office of Community Sustainability (OCS).

OES, envisioned in the 2007 report produced by the Commission on Environment and Sustainability, was created in order to help Howard County develop into a model green community, and has done a great deal of work over the course of the past eight years to achieve that end. To date, the Office has focused on initiatives to create a more sustainable society almost exclusively through an environmental perspective. This administration believes through its review of current literature and research that creating a truly sustainable society requires more than an environmental perspective, but an economic and agricultural one as well. It is with this in mind that this administration recommends the broadening of the Office of Environmental Sustainability's duties and responsibilities to assess the economic, agricultural, and



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environmental impacts of all sustainability initiatives. This intent is reflected in the Office's proposed name change to be Office of Community Sustainability (OCS).

OCS will provide the County Executive with a more comprehensive approach toward developing a sustainable society in Howard County. The Office will be charged with conducting the research, developing policy, and coordinating with various agencies throughout the government that have a specific role in achieving the desired initiatives. The Office will serve to research said initiatives, identify the stakeholders within county government that play a role in implementing the program or project, and have the authority to coordinate across agencies to implement the County Executive's desired strategies. The new office will work with many organizations, boards, commissions, and communities in Howard County to ensure that future business and agricultural development is executed in a sustainable manner.

Additionally, the Office will have the capacity to develop new financing strategies in order to support infrastructure needs associated with stormwater remediation. This new direction will provide OCS, and the County Executive, with the tools necessary to set Howard County on the path toward long-term viability of its infrastructure and natural resources. This bill will make no changes to the Environmental Sustainability Board, whose role will remain to advise OCS on policy and implementation.

Fiscal Impact

The Administration anticipates that this Bill will have nominal, if any, fiscal impact.

Cc: Jon Weinstein, Council Vice-Chairperson



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Calvin Ball, Councilperson
Greg Fox, Councilperson
Jennifer Terrasa, Councilperson
Jessica Feldmark, Administrator