



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony on Council Bill No. ____–2009, legalizing the 2008 Edition of the Howard County Code

To: Lonnie Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Administration

From: Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator

Date: February 17, 2009

Pursuant to the Charter requirement that the County’s laws be codified every ten years, the Office of Law has recently asked the Municipal Code Corporation for a reprint of the Howard County Code.¹ The reprint will remove blank pages and will divide the Code into 2 volumes. The reprint will also use a three-ring-divider style of binder instead of the current five rings. These changes will make the reprint much more user-friendly than the current version of the Code.²

The current version of the Code was “legalized” by passage of Council Bill No. 15-1977 and the County needs to “legalize” the reprint. To “legalize” a Code means to formally approve the Code and declare that the Code is evidence of the local laws of Howard County. Council legalization of the Code serves to:

1. Legitimize the Code as evidence of Howard County law in court.
2. Clarify that the Code is not being adopted as the law in place of the bills enacted by the County Council and the County Executive; if a discrepancy exists between the published Code and an enacted bill, the enacted bill will control.

The County had a credit with the Municipal Code Corporation so there is no charge for new Codes that will be sent to County departments. The reprint is available free, online through a link at www.municode.com.

¹ While the Charter (§210(c)) assigns this responsibility to the Council, the Office of Law arranges for periodic supplements to the Code; it also arranged the publication of the last new edition of the Code, in 1977.

² The reprint as attached to the bill says it is current through Council Bill No. 54-2006. This is a mistake that will be corrected by the Code publisher. The reprint actually is current through Council bill 54-2008