



Howard County Association of REALTORS®
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December 15, 2015

Dr. Calvin Ball, Chairperson, District 2
Mr. Jon Weinstein, Vice Chairperson, District 1
Ms. Jen Terrasa, Councilmember, District 3
Ms. Mary Kay Sigaty, Councilmember, District 4
Mr. Greg Fox, Councilmember, District 5
Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043-4392

RE: CB52-2015, CR181-2015, and CR182-2015

Dear Members of the County Council:

The Howard County Association of REALTORS® supports the enactment of CB52-2015 which calls for the reduction of the existing Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee beginning on July 1, 2016 and the repeal of certain provisions in the County Code related to the fee as of July 1, 2017.

Among the jurisdictions in Maryland that impose this tax on its residents, Howard County's fee structure is the 4th highest and is slated to increase in the coming years if CB52-2015 is not passed. This tax impairs housing affordability for potential buyers in the County, increases rent, increases homeowners' monthly mortgage payments and reduces the amount of disposable household family incomes. This tax burden is particularly onerous to our low- to moderate-income families.

This tax also harms the County's commercial and industrial property owners. By significantly increasing commercial property tax bills by 10% or more, businesses in the County must ultimately pass on to the consumer, many of whom are also County residents, higher prices for goods and services. Moreover, higher taxes make Howard County less attractive to commercial enterprises seeking a place to establish, grow and create job opportunities.

Please support passage of CB52-2015 and the accompanying resolutions CR181-2015, and CR182-2015. Broad based home affordability and economic growth are critical to the long-term health and vibrancy of Howard County.

Sincerely yours,

Alicyn DelZoppo
President
Howard County Association of REALTORS®