

Governor

May 23, 1986

The Honorable Harry Hughes
Governor, State of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Hughes:

This letter is to once again request that you veto House Bill 1183, which will have the effect of eliminating cluster development of residential property in Prince George's County, Maryland. The County government is acutely aware of the concerns that have been raised regarding our current cluster process. In response to this we have proposed legislation that will address the issues thus far raised and anticipate likely Council approval of these bills shortly.

As the time period for action draws to a close, we are becoming increasingly concerned with the devastating effect that this bill will have on our land development policies should it be allowed to become law.

Clearly a subdivision tool, the use of cluster would only be permitted under House Bill 1183 if a developer is willing to go through the entire process of rezoning -- a lengthy and expensive procedure. Without cluster, much quality development and open space would be lost. Of critical importance is the severe detrimental impact that this legislation would have on the sensitive environmental questions relating to the Chesapeake Bay.

Cluster development as it is now permitted, enables the creation of smaller individual lots in a closely spaced area, with large amounts of land remaining open and undeveloped. It does not represent increased density over the parcel nor does it permit cookie-cutter development in a checkerboard fashion to occur over a given tract of land.

It creates more aesthetically pleasing communities, reduces the amount of area paved, and lessens costs associated with streets and other public facilities by reducing the area to be served by infrastructure improvements.

Clustering as a land use tool is critical if we are to implement the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas plan and the Patuxent River Watershed Plan. It is through cluster that we can protect land from excessive grading and preserve those environmentally sensitive areas. To allow HB 1183 to become law is counter to the State's policies designed to protect and improve the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

We respectively and urgently request that you veto House Bill 1183. The use of cluster is a local planning issue. HB