

May 15, 2002

The Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr.
Speaker of the House
State House
Annapolis MD 21401

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed House Bill 1374 – Frederick County – Zoning – Referendum.

House Bill 1374 would have provided that an ordinance or an amendment to an existing ordinance that enacts a substantial rewrite, replacement or repeal of the Frederick County zoning ordinance must take effect 30 days after the date of enactment, unless the ordinance or amendment is petitioned to a county referendum. The bill outlines various procedures of how such a petition and referendum should be administered, including the requirement that a petition submitted must be signed by at least three percent of the number of qualified voters of Frederick County who voted for Governor in the last preceding gubernatorial election.

It is the responsibility of local government to oversee development by enacting reasonable zoning ordinances. The citizens of Frederick County elect individuals to serve on the Frederick County Board of County Commissioners to carry out this responsibility. Zoning ordinances must be enacted to promote the overall health, safety and welfare of a community. While I strongly respect the right of citizens to question and protest the actions taken by their government, to allow a small number of citizens to delay the effective date of a zoning ordinance is not good public policy.

On both the State level and on the local level, if voters are dissatisfied with the actions taken by their elected officials, they have the absolute right and responsibility to make their opinions known at the polls. Every four years, officials must be re-elected. Rather than allowing zoning ordinances to take effect on a "piecemeal" basis, the citizens of Frederick County should hold their elected officials accountable and make their opinions known in each election.

For the above reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 1374.

Sincerely,
Parris N. Glendening
Governor

House Bill No. 1374

AN ACT concerning

Frederick County - Zoning - Referendum

FOR the purpose of requiring certain zoning ordinances adopted or amended by the Board of County Commissioners of Frederick County to be submitted to a referendum under certain circumstances; establishing standards and procedures for a referendum on a county zoning ordinance; authorizing a special