

Council Chamber Annapolis February 1/1803

Sir,

The letter you honoured me with dated on the 26<sup>th</sup> of last month was left at the Government House, during my absence from Town, and I have delayed replying until my return under a fruitless expectation of communicating with the Council on the subject.

In selecting Commissioners on the Susquehanna business it was certainly a primary object with me to procure your services to the State; Pennsylvania has hitherto negotiated with Maryland and Virginia, extremely to her own satisfaction and equally to the dissatisfaction of those States. It would perhaps be unwarrantable to say that this has resulted from the superiority of Talents and information of her Commissioners. But she certainly has been remarkable in bringing forward on such occasions the most distinguished and experienced of her Citizens.

The public confidence in your impartiality and my own knowledge of your general information, and talents, render me anxious that if there should be a meeting on this subject, you should attend on the part of this State, and I could hope that any particular information you might acquire relative thereto, would be highly useful to the public and not particularly inconvenient or burdensome to yourself.

Certainly the right which Maryland has already exercised, contested newly by Pennsylvania, and complicated with the claims of the Canal Company and the party prejudices that exist on the subject, render the transaction delicate and important.

It is unnecessary for me to remark further on the appointment made by the Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January last, the circumstances attending which have been already so fully exposed to the Public, unless to add, that the result of my subsequent reflection and inquiries have confirmed my opinion that it is illegal. Under this impression I can take no step to give my sanction to that procedure, but if the thing should progress as I hope it will and a meeting become practicable during the year, I shall hold myself ready to take any ulterior and proper measures, which may promote the objects of the Legislature and interest of the State, and the harmony of the Board with whom I am constitutionally to advise on the general objects of appointments.

The Honble Alexander C. Hanson  
Chancellor of Maryland

With sincere respect  
I am Sir

Your obed. Servant  
John F. Mercer