



Rich History, Bright Future
**Frederick County
Government**
Frederick, Maryland

News Release

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CONTACT: [Robin K. Santangelo](#)
Public Information Officer, 301-600-2590

Strongest ethics in Maryland . . .

County Executive Gardner Announces Measures to Strengthen Ethics Laws and Restore Citizen Trust in Government

FREDERICK, MD – County Executive Jan Gardner today announced two measures to strengthen Frederick County’s ethics laws, restore citizens’ trust in government and keep the county on the leading edge of ethics reform in Maryland.

“Trust in government is absolutely fundamental to good government,” commented Executive Gardner. “Thanks to support from a majority of the County Council, we are working to make our ethics laws stronger and hold our elected officials to the highest standard of behavior.”

One measure would help to ensure that land use decisions remain independent and free from the perception of political influence. She proposed prohibiting rezoning requests during the six-month period prior to a county election and the three months that follow an election in order to remove the perception and replace it with a culture of transparency, honesty and good government. Similar restrictions are in place in The City of Frederick.

The county executive also announced a second measure codify the independent appointment process that the county piloted for nominations for the county’s Ethics Commission. No elected official sees the names of applicants until the independent nominating committee has vetted them through a thorough, objective interview. The successful pilot, spearheaded by the non-partisan League of Women Voters, would become law under legislation being introduced by County Council President Bud Otis.

“I wish to extend my appreciation to President Otis for his role in strengthening county ethics laws through the independent appointment process for the Ethics Commission,” added Executive Gardner.

Executive Gardner’s proposals will keep Frederick County on the leading edge of ethics reform in Maryland. The county has the strongest ethics laws in the State of Maryland. No other county has an independent, non-political process for appointing members to its Ethics Commission. Frederick also leads the way as one of only three counties in the state that addresses the conflict of interest that can arise when developers try to influence land use decisions. Last year the county signed a bill that prohibits elected officials and their families from doing business with the county as a way to reduce the perception of conflicts of interest.

Additionally, the county’s only proposed legislation this year before the Frederick Delegation would broaden the scope of the State Public Ethics Law to include Planning Commission members running for County Executive or County Council.

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