



# 2024 LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

## FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT



County Executive Jessica Fitzwater



## JESSICA FITZWATER

COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

November 28, 2023

Frederick County Delegation Chair Jesse  
Pippy  
212 Lowe House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Frederick County Delegation Vice Chair  
William Folden  
414 James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pippy, Co-Chair Folden, and Members of the Frederick County Delegation,

Under Charter government, it is the County Executive's role to advance the state legislative priorities of the County. Throughout this process, it has been my goal is to submit a Legislative Package for the upcoming General Assembly Session that includes legislation that improves the lives of Frederick County residents and allows for a more efficient and effective County government. I view the Frederick County Delegation as a crucial partner in this work.

My team has been working diligently to prepare for the 2024 legislative session throughout the interim. To kick off this process, we held a legislative listening tour throughout Frederick County Divisions and Departments during the spring and summer. Building off of the process created by the prior administration, we solicited ideas for potential legislation from the public, County Boards and Commissions, the County Council, local community organizations, and municipalities. A full list of the external organizations that received requests for ideas is included in this packet.

As a result of this inclusive, collaborative, and transparent process, I have compiled a legislative package that includes both legislation and position statements on behalf of the County. Within the Legislative Package there are three (3) bills and six (6) position statements from the County Executive. There is also one (1) bill proposed by the County Council. We received 86 requests from the public, which can be viewed at <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/3323/Legislative-Affairs>.

This process demonstrates the collaboration between all levels of government to address the needs and concerns of the citizens of Frederick County.

Sincerely

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive

## Legislative Calendar 2023 - 2024

Date	Activity
Mid-April to Mid-July of 2023	Seek legislative ideas from Frederick County Divisions and Departments
Friday, July 28, 2023	Seek legislative ideas by letter to 150+ organizations
Thursday, August 24, 2023	Ask for input and legislative specifics from municipal leaders - Mayors/Burgesses meeting
Tuesday, September 12, 2023	Overview of proposed legislative process/request legislative ideas and proposals from the County Council
October 2023	County Council Approval of Council's Legislative Initiatives for 2024 Legislative Package
Thursday, October 5, 2023	County Executive to host a Town Hall meeting (1 <sup>st</sup> floor Winchester Hall) on proposed 2024 General Assembly Legislative Package
End of October	County Council Considers 2024 Legislative Package
Mid-November	Send Memo to State Delegation with Final Package
Saturday, December 2, 2023 10:00 a.m.	Delegation Public Hearing - Winchester Hall
Wednesday, January 10, 2024 Noon	First day of the 2023 session of the Maryland General Assembly

## List of Organizations

The following organizations received a letter soliciting input on the Frederick County Legislative Package. This list was created using prior legislative outreach materials and the list of applicants to the Community Partnership Grant program in Frederick County.

Adult Public Guardianship Review Board	Fire and Rescue Advisory Board
Advisory Plumbing Board	Fort Detrick Alliance
Advocates for Homeless Families, Inc.	Frederick Arts Council
Affordable Housing Council	Frederick Book Arts Center Inc
African American Resources Cultural and Heritage Society	Frederick Community College
Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board	Frederick Community College Board of Trustees
Agricultural Reconciliation Committee	Frederick County Association of Realtors, Inc.
Agriculture Business Council	Frederick County Building Industry Association
American Red Cross serving Montgomery, Howard and Frederick Counties	Frederick County Public Schools
Asian American Center of Frederick	Frederick County Volunteer
Association of Nigerians in Frederick	Fire & Rescue Association, Inc.
Ausherman Family Foundation	Frederick Health Hospice
Blessings in a Backpack, Frederick Maryland	Frederick Regional Youth Orchestra
Board of Education of Frederick County	Fredericktowne Players
Board of Elections	Get Kids Outside
Board of Gaming Appeals	Girls on the Run
Board of Zoning Appeals	Global Necessity Corporation
Business and Industry Cabinet	Golden Care of Frederick
Catoctin & Frederick Soil Conservation Districts	Heartly House, Inc.
Centro Hispano de Frederick	Historic Preservation Commission
Chamber of Commerce of Frederick County	Hood College
Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership	Housing Authority of the City of Frederick
City of Brunswick	Human Relations Commission
City of Frederick	I Believe in Me Inc.
City Youth Matrix	Immigrant Affairs Commission
Commission For Women	Insurance Committee
Commission on Disabilities	Interagency Internal Audit Authority
Containment Laboratory	Interfaith Housing Alliance, Inc.
Community Advisory Committee	Justice and Recovery Advocates, Inc.
Crossed BRIDGES	Justice Jobs of Maryland, Inc.
Daybreak Adult Day Services, Inc	Lake Linganore Association, Inc.
Delaplaine Foundation	Lead4Life, Inc.
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council	League of Women Voters of Frederick County
Each 1 Teach 1, Inc	Literacy Council of Frederick County
Electrical Board	Living Well Youth Works
Empowering Community Leaders Network, Inc.	Local Management Board
Endangered Species Theatre Project	Maryland Legal Aid
Equity and Inclusion Commission	Mental Health Advisory Committee
Ethics Commission	Mental Health Association
Farm Bureau of Frederick County, Inc.	Mission of Mercy
	Mobilize Frederick
	Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense
	Mount Saint Mary's University
	On Our Own of Frederick County

Parks and Recreation Commission  
Partners In Care Maryland Maryland, Inc.  
Phoenix Foundation of Maryland  
Planning Commission  
Police Accountability Board  
PTA Council of Frederick County  
Public Library Board  
Rebuilding Together Frederick County, MD, Inc.  
Roads Board of Frederick County  
Safe Ride Foundation Inc.  
Senior Services Advisory Board  
Seton Center Inc.  
Sierra Club Catoctin Group  
SOAR, Supporting Older Adults through  
Resources, Inc.  
Social Services Board  
Solid Waste Advisory Committee  
Spanish Speaking Community of Maryland, Inc.  
STEM ENABLE INC  
Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership of  
Frederick County, Inc.  
Substance Abuse Council  
Sustainability Commission  
Sustainable Monocacy Commission  
Technology Council of Frederick County  
The Arc of Frederick County  
The Birthing Circle Inc.  
The Community Foundation of Frederick County  
The Delaplaine Arts Center, Inc.  
The Frederick Center, Inc.

The Frederick Children's Chorus  
The Global Z Recording Project  
The Religious Coalition for Emergency Human  
Needs in Frederick County, Inc.  
Tourism Council of Frederick County, Inc.  
Town of Burkittsville  
Town of Emmitsburg  
Town of Middletown  
Town of Mount Airy  
Town of Myersville  
Town of New Market  
Town of Thurmont  
Town of Walkersville  
Town of Woodsboro  
Transformative Arts Project  
Transportation Services Advisory Council  
Turner Boxing Club's Youth & Development  
Program  
United Way of Frederick County, Inc.  
Veterans Advisory Council  
Village of Rosemont  
Way Station, Inc  
Whole Heart Grief & Life Resource Center  
Woman to Woman Mentoring, Inc.  
Women's Giving Circle  
Workforce Development Board  
YMCA of Frederick County

# Proposed Legislation



## JESSICA FITZWATER

COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

### PRIORITY LEGISLATION

#### Frederick County Historic Preservation Tax Credit

To allow for the creation of a Frederick County Historic Preservation Tax Credit program in local code that will improve accessibility of the tax credit, the Maryland General Assembly should pass legislation that strikes Tax Property Code §9-312 (b) (2).

Currently, Frederick County's Historic Preservation Tax Credit is codified in state law and determined by the change in assessed value. Unfortunately, many projects do not trigger the existing eligibility requirement even though they provide significant preservation benefits. Because of this, Frederick County cannot offer tax relief to property owners undertaking historic preservation projects like roof replacements.

By removing the tax credit from state code, we allow the local governing body to establish a program that best fits the needs of our historic property owners and incentivizes projects that offer significant preservation benefits. After the state code is amended, I will introduce legislation for County Council consideration to establish a historic preservation tax credit that is based on Qualified Rehabilitation Expense. This reformed tax credit would apply to more projects and therefore help more property owners afford preservation projects.

Historic preservation projects are a crucial part of maintaining the integrity and legacy of Frederick County. It is important that tax incentives for historic preservation are designed in a way that meet the needs of property owners. Passing legislation to remove this program from state code is the first step in making this a reality.

## Proposed Bill Language

§ 9-312. Frederick County.

**(a)**

(1) The governing body of Frederick County and of a municipal corporation in Frederick County shall grant a property tax credit under this section against the county and municipal corporation property tax imposed on property that:

- (i) is owned by the Frederick Optimist Boy's Foundation, Incorporated; and
- (ii) is not under a lease or rented commercially.

(2) In paragraph (1) of this subsection, commercial renting does not include the operation of a parking lot.

**(b)**

(1) The governing body of Frederick County shall grant a property tax credit under this section against the county tax imposed on:

- (i) real property that is owned by the Emmitsburg Civic Association, Incorporated; and
- (ii) real property on which an improvement is made to an existing structure that is located in a historic district.

(2) ~~A property tax credit granted under paragraph (1)(ii) of this subsection shall be:~~

- ~~(i) the following percentage of the increase that is due to the improvement:~~

- ~~1. 100% of the increase in the assessment of the real property in the 1st and 2nd taxable years that the improved structure is subject to the county property tax;~~
- ~~2. 80% of the increase in the assessment of the real property in the 3rd taxable year that the improved structure is subject to the county property tax;~~
- ~~3. 60% of the increase in the assessment of the real property in the 4th taxable year that the improved structure is subject to the county property tax; and~~
- ~~4. 40% of the increase in the assessment of the real property in the 5th taxable year that the structure is subject to the county property tax; and~~

- ~~(ii) ended after the 5th taxable year that the improved structure is subject to county property tax.~~



## JESSICA FITZWATER

COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

### PRIORITY LEGISLATION

#### Paratransit Funding Task Force

As our population ages and demand for paratransit services increases, State and local governments will need to address the growing funding deficit for this crucial service. The Maryland General Assembly should establish a Paratransit Funding Task Force to study the needs of this service and propose recommendations to adequately and sustainably fund it.

Paratransit is a door-to-door demand-response service for older adults and disabled residents to assist with transportation for medical appointments. Currently, in Maryland, the State offers a small amount of funding via the Specialized Statewide Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP). This funding has been flat for 16 years, outside of an adjustment for inflation, and Counties have contributed a growing share of the costs of this program. With the aging of our population, local governments cannot keep pace with the funding needs of this service.

At present, Frederick County is providing a significant overmatch to maintain the program; approximately \$1,000,000 annually. While our Frederick County Transit team has made many efforts to help address the growing need, including expanding the Taxi Access Program and providing transit trainings to increase the use of the fixed route system, these strategies cannot substantially offset the increased demand. We estimate that there will be an estimated 10,000 trip denials in FY24 due to insufficient funding.

While the state has adjusted SSTAP funding to account for inflation, the changing demographics and increased demand for the service have not been accounted for in State funding decisions. The State, in coordination with local partners, must identify funding solutions to sustain this program.

The Task Force should study the growing demand for paratransit, potential funding mechanisms for the program, and the industries that benefit from the availability of this service. The final report from the Task Force should include legislative recommendations to help alleviate the financial burden on local governments and ensure the decrease and eventual elimination of trip denials as a result of insufficient funding.

I look forward to working in partnership with the State on this matter to ensure our older adults and constituents with disabilities can access reliable transportation for their medical appointments.



## JESSICA FITZWATER

COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

### PRIORITY LEGISLATION

#### Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing – Safety Standards

To improve building safety and protect Maryland residents and first responders, I urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass legislation that requires Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) to meet the LC1027 rating.

Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) is a product used to deliver propane and methane gas in homes across the country and is prone to malfunction that can cause gas leaks and fires. Maryland has taken action to address CSST malfunction and improve safety. Steps have been taken along the way in Maryland to make this product safer, including prohibiting the use of non-arc-resistant CSST in Maryland in 2022.

While arc-resistant CSST is marginally safer than traditional CSST, its rating is only sufficient for up to 4.5 Coulombs, based on test charges. The average lightning strike in the US is approximately 24-28 Coulombs but can be much higher.<sup>1</sup> Only the LC1027 standard has a rating sufficient for the average lightning strike, with tests at 36 Coulombs.

In 2016 the International Code Council, in partnership with the Fire Service Membership Council and the National Association of State Fire Marshals, unanimously endorsed ICC LC1027. The Fire Marshal, firefighters, fire investigators, and engineers have identified the LC1027 standard as the way to meaningfully improve safety.

This issue is particularly important to Frederick County because the lightning-induced failure of CSST was a contributing factor in the line-of-duty death of Frederick County Battalion Chief Josh Laird. Improving the safety of buildings in Maryland, and therefore mitigating the risks presented to our firefighters and other first responders, is a fitting and imperative way to honor the legacy of Battalion Chief Laird.

<sup>1</sup> International Symposium on Fire Investigation Science and Technology

Bill No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Requested: \_\_\_\_\_  
Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Drafted by: Carpenter  
Typed by: Lynn  
Stored – 11/15/23  
Proofread by \_\_\_\_\_  
Checked by \_\_\_\_\_

By: **Delegate Stein**

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Safety – Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Fuel Gas Piping Systems –**  
3 **Requirements and Prohibitions**

4 FOR the purpose of prohibiting the sale, offer for sale, transfer, or distribution of corrugated  
5 stainless steel tubing that does not meet a certain standard; requiring certain tubing  
6 used in the construction of fuel gas piping systems in certain buildings to meet a  
7 certain standard; and generally relating to corrugated stainless steel tubing.

8 BY adding to

9 Article – Business Regulation  
10 Section 19–107  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

14 Article – Public Safety  
15 Section 12–206  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



## Article – Business Regulation

2 19-107.

3           (A) A PERSON MAY NOT SELL, OFFER FOR SALE, TRANSFER, OR DISTRIBUTE  
4    CORRUGATED STAINLESS STEEL TUBING THAT DOES NOT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS  
5    OF THE LC1027 STANDARD DESCRIBED IN THE MOST RECENT EDITION OF THE  
6    INTERNATIONAL FUEL AND GAS CODE ISSUED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CODE  
7    COUNCIL.

8           (B) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS SUBJECT TO A CIVIL  
9 PENALTY NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000.

## Article – Public Safety

11 12-206.

12 (a) This section applies to any building that uses fuel gas piping systems not  
13 subject to Title 49, Part 192 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

14 (b) [Non-arc-resistant jacketed] **ONLY** corrugated stainless steel tubing **THAT**  
15 **MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LC1027 STANDARD DESCRIBED IN THE MOST**  
16 **RECENT EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUEL AND GAS CODE ISSUED BY THE**  
17 **INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL** may [not] be used in:

(1) the new construction of a customer-owned natural gas or liquefied propane piping system in a building;

(3) a natural gas or liquefied propane piping system that requires the addition of a new gas line to the gas piping system.

25 (C) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS SUBJECT TO A CIVIL  
26 PENALTY NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
2 October 1, 2024.

# Position Statements



## **JESSICA FITZWATER**

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND**

### **POSITION STATEMENT**

**Energy Savings Act – EmPower Reform**

**County Position: Support**

Frederick County residents would benefit from the passage of the Energy Savings Act and, as the County Executive, I support this initiative.

The EmPOWER program has been highly successful in achieving its goals of incentivizing energy efficiency and reducing Maryland electric bills. As Maryland looks towards a clean energy future, where all our residents can enjoy the benefits of clean energy and energy efficiency, the EmPOWER program will be a vital tool in resolving the barriers to electrification and retrofit for low-income and overburdened residents.

The proposed legislation would help equitably target EmPOWER's benefits to residents that could most benefit from energy savings and improved living environments. A recent report from United Way of Central Maryland found that in Frederick County 36% of households are unable to afford basic needs. The cost of utilities, particularly water and space heating, is a contributing factor to this equation. By investing in programs that increase energy efficiency, we can provide financial relief to families that need it the most.

While the EmPOWER Program has been an effective tool in increasing energy efficiency throughout the electric grid, with the proposed adjustment, this program could be utilized to support our state's climate goals while also making our homes healthier, through weatherization and improvements such as lead and asbestos removal, mold remediation, and electric panel retrofits.

The proposed bill would help to address the needs of Frederick County residents in the following key ways:

- Provide additional rebates for efficient heating and appliances;
- Provide support for weatherization, building shell improvements, and more efficient home heating and appliances;
- Support fuel switching to electric where feasible;
- Focus on energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

For these reasons, I strongly support this proposed legislation.



## **JESSICA FITZWATER**

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND**

### **POSITION STATEMENT**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies -  
Local Just Cause Termination Provisions**

**County Position: Support**

As housing costs rise and economic uncertainty remains, state and local governments must work in coordination to protect tenants. The General Assembly should pass legislation to authorize counties to establish laws preventing landlords from failing to renew or terminating leases without just cause.

Housing is a basic human need, and the urgency for housing security should be a priority during this legislative session. Currently, there are few protections in place that prevent landlords from evicting tenants without just cause. Providing these protections helps ensure renters have the stability and certainty they need to stay rooted in their communities.

While “Just Cause Eviction” policy is enshrined in federal law for subsidized housing and has been enacted in over 20 U.S. cities and five states, Maryland law does not explicitly authorize Maryland counties to legislate on this subject matter. By granting express authorization to Maryland counties to pass Just Cause Eviction policies, the General Assembly will enable counties to adopt local laws or ordinances that are the best fit for their community.

Passing this legislation, introduced as HB 684 and SB 504 in 2023, will protect our more vulnerable residents and provide counties with autonomy in establishing their own just cause stipulations.



## JESSICA FITZWATER

COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

## POSITION STATEMENT

Coordination with the Maryland Association of Counties

County Position: Support

As the Frederick County Executive and member of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Legislative Committee, I support MACo's 2024 legislative priorities, including incentives for firefighter and EMS recruitment and retention, transparency in education spending, and comprehensive housing solutions.

### **Supporting Firefighter and EMS Recruitment and Retention**

Legislation passed in 2023 established the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting and Emergency Medical Services Within Maryland. As the Commission makes its recommendation, State and local governments should work together to coordinate resources and efforts to support firefighter and EMS recruitment and retention.

### **Transparency in Education Spending**

As the funding authorities for schools, local governments should have a clear understanding of the sources and uses of public school funding. To ensure that local governments have information to assess budget priorities proposed by their school boards, Maryland law should ensure that decision-makers and education stakeholders can connect public funds to the needed investments for educational outcomes.

### **Housing Solutions**

As the fastest-growing County in Maryland, Frederick County has been significantly impacted by the crisis in housing affordability. The General Assembly should work with local governments to address the leading factors contributing to the housing crisis, including financing gaps, insufficient data, and permitting delays. In this work, policies should incentivize affordable housing in close proximity to transit.

The General Assembly should collaborate closely with MACo and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to pass additional rental protections that focus on serving our most vulnerable residents and establish creative financing solutions to increase the affordable housing stock. Addressing the lack of affordable housing will require persistent collaboration between all levels of government and with external stakeholders and partners.

MACo's legislative priorities offer several policy areas where the General Assembly can work in partnership with their local elected leaders to address issues impacting their shared constituencies. I urge the General Assembly to prioritize these initiatives in the 2024 legislative session.



## JESSICA FITZWATER

COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

## POSITION STATEMENT

### Additional Support of the Nutrient Management Plan Program

County Position: Support

As the Frederick County Executive, I urge the Maryland General Assembly, in close coordination with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, University of Maryland Extension (UME), the Nutrient Management Advisory Committee, and local governments, to address ongoing challenges and barriers for our farmers in meeting state requirements to have up-to-date and accurate Nutrient Management Plans.

Maryland law requires all farmers grossing \$2,500 a year or more or livestock producers with 8,000 pounds of live animal weights to follow nutrient management plans when fertilizing crops and managing animal manure. Nutrient management plans specify how much fertilizer, manure or other nutrient sources may be safely applied to crops to achieve yields and prevent excess nutrients from impacting waterways and are therefore an important regulatory tool for a state that balances agricultural industries with bay and waterway health. These plans also help guide farmers in nutrient application and allow them to access beneficial programs and funding sources. However, these plans are complex and require regular updates, requiring most farmers to rely on a certified University of Maryland specialist or certified private consultant. These specialists and consultants are in short supply, creating barriers to Maryland farmers in meeting state regulations.

As Maryland's largest agricultural County with the greatest number of farms and farmland acres, Frederick County is well positioned to advocate for improvements to the nutrient management plan process. I was pleased to hear in July of 2023 that the Department of Agriculture had created a 30-member Farmer Taskforce, convening in August to provide guidance to MDA and UMD regarding ways to improve the nutrient management plan to be more practical for all farmers to implement.

As the Taskforce and the Nutrient Management Advisory Committee compiles regulatory and legislative recommendations for changes to this program, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the challenges Frederick County farmers are facing:

1. **Ongoing backlogs.** Frederick County farmers are facing significant delays in the completion of nutrient management plans through UME. This is likely due to staff turnover and retention issues that can be attributed, at least in part, to the insufficient salaries and lack of benefits offered to plan writers. Frederick County has not had a nutrient management position within the UME office for nearly a year. As a result, the Catoctin and Frederick Soil Conservation Districts have been preparing plans but do not have adequate staff to support the demand in Frederick County. UME announced at the Nutrient Management plan writing summit that they would pursue additional and more permanent funding to address staffing concerns. I encourage the Maryland General Assembly to support this effort in any way possible.
2. **High costs.** Because of delays and lack of staffing, many farmers rely on private, often out of state, consultants to write their plans. These consultants are extremely hard to come by

with only 45 privately licensed plan writers for the state of Maryland. This creates higher costs and can introduce additional delays or barriers.

3. **Lack of support for organic and specialty crops.** While many farms in Maryland focus on commodity crops, the organic and specialty crop market is growing and requires more tailored nutrient management plans. The current program has an outsized focus on commodity products, leaving farmers that focus on organic and specialty crops, and in turn may have more complicated nutrient management plans, less supported by the program. Frederick County leads in the number of organic farms in the state and therefore feels this impact greatly. The State's nutrient management program should encourage more innovative and ecological practices, not create additional barriers.
4. **Compliance.** Only about 80% of farms that are required to have a nutrient management plan have a plan. The current outdated software and model fail to meet the advanced needs of today's agricultural industry. It is imperative that we update these regulations and computer programs to ensure that we can protect our natural resources effectively.

I look forward to working with the Maryland General Assembly, Maryland Department of Agriculture, UME, and the Taskforce to address these concerns over the coming months. As legislative, regulatory, and budgetary solutions arise, I urge the Maryland General Assembly to support them.



## **JESSICA FITZWATER**

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND**

### **POSITION STATEMENT**

Additional support to local governments for transportation and fixed-route transit

County Position: Support

As the Frederick County Executive, I urge the Maryland General Assembly to increase funding to local governments for transportation infrastructure and fixed route transit. In particular, the Maryland General Assembly should restore local Highway User Revenues (HUR) allocations to local governments and increase investments in the rural and urbanized area fixed-route transit operations funding.

Local transportation funding continues to lag pre-recession levels and existing demand, despite 83% of our state's road miles falling under the responsibility of local governments. Frederick County is responsible for nearly 1,300 centerline miles of roadway, 222 twenty-foot-plus span bridges, 250 ten to twenty-foot span bridges, and approximately 6,000 culverts. The State has an obligation to fund this public infrastructure and should restore the full local share of Highway User Revenues.

Additionally, Frederick County's comprehensive plan – known as Livable Frederick – depends on stable investments in transit and multimodal transportation. Importantly, the South Frederick Corridor Plan will require investments in our transit system to support expanded services. Transit operations continue to remain under financial strain, and the equivalent local match at increased levels is crucial to effective transit operations at the County level. Access to reliable transportation continues to be a challenge for many County residents, including older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income or Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households.

In both the urbanized and rural areas, there is a great need for more transportation options. We are seeking to increase annual operating funding to expand services and provide County residents with more robust transit options. Sustained financial support from MDOT is critical to providing quality transit service in Frederick County. I urge the state to increase the state match to 5311 and 5307 operating funding to help support rural and urbanize transit.

I look forward to working with the Maryland General Assembly and the Maryland Department of Transportation on all our local transportation needs.



## **JESSICA FITZWATER**

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND**

### **POSITION STATEMENT**

State School Capital Improvement Program

County Position: Support increased investment

As Frederick County Executive, and in partnership with Frederick County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Dyson, I urge the Maryland General Assembly to increase funding for the State Capital Improvement Program for public schools in order to meet existing commitments to provide high-quality teaching and learning environments for all of Maryland's students and to implement the requirements of the Blueprint for Education.

In FY 2025 and beyond, the State should provide a minimum of \$600 million in State Capital Improvement Program funding and establish an annual inflationary adjustment to be added to the base State Capital Improvement Program funding beginning in FY 2026. The inflationary adjustment should be commensurate with the cost per square foot adjustment, expressed as a percentage, approved annually by the Interagency Commission on School Construction.

Maryland is committed to providing quality teaching and learning environments for all of Maryland's students and maintaining Maryland's existing inventory of school facilities. As the benchmarks of Maryland's Blueprint for Education approach, the state must also support local governments and local education agencies in meeting these commitments with adequate facility space. Therefore, state capital improvement funding must not only adjust for inflation, but also account for the costs associated with providing new educational space to fulfill the requirements in Maryland's Blueprint for Education.

The increase to \$600 million for the State Capital Improvement Program, with an annual inflation factor escalation, will provide additional funding for the programmatic space needed to implement the Blueprint for Education requirements while maintaining necessary resources for other funding categories, such as the Built to Learn school construction program, the Healthy Schools program, the Aging Schools program, the Enrollment Growth and Relocatable Classroom program, and other school construction funding programs.

As an educator for 17 years, I understand first-hand the importance of investing in our school facilities. Furthermore, as the County Executive of the fastest growing county and school system in the state, I intimately understand the financial challenges of building and maintaining the complex learning environments needed to teach all students in today's education system. State partnership, particularly in the form of increased capital improvement funding, is crucial for the success of our Maryland schools.

# Proposed Legislation from County Council



**County Council  
Frederick County**

## PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Proposed Amendment to Maryland State Law  
to Allow Credit Card Usage for Gaming

**County Position: SUPPORT**

The Frederick County Council requests the Frederick County Delegation to support legislation authorizing credit card usage for online gaming in Frederick County.

### **The Current Process**

Individuals in Maryland, like in many other states, can use their credit cards to purchase lottery tickets. Lottery tickets can be bought with credit or debit cards at various authorized retail locations, online platforms, or through mobile applications associated with the Maryland State Lottery. However, at this time, credit cards are not permitted to be used when purchasing gaming items.

### **What is being Proposed in this Amendment?**

Fire Companies would like to utilize online raffles as a method for fund raising as the cost of their operations continues to increase. State law needs to be altered to allow nonprofit corporations and others to accept payment via credit cards for gaming events.

# Requests from the Public

During the months of August, September, and October, the Office of the County Executive solicited ideas and input from roughly 150 external organizations, including our local school system, institutions of higher education, local nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, and more.

We received 86 requests from the public. Requests ranged from broad ideas to fully drafted legislative language. Many organizations submitted similar ideas and voiced support for similar initiatives.

The full packet of requests from the public, including requests made at or after the October 4<sup>th</sup> Town Hall, can be viewed on the Legislative Affairs page of the Frederick County Government Website at <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/3323/Legislative-Affairs>