

*Subcommittees*

Banking, Consumer Protection,  
and Commercial Law

Property and Casualty Insurance

Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**End-of-Session Letter**  
**2020 Maryland General Assembly Regular Session**  
**April 30, 2020**

**Introduction**

Despite the early adjournment, much progress was made during the 2020 General Assembly Regular Session. This newsletter is a brief summary of legislation affecting District 9B, as well as a recap of selected statewide bills. Of great significance are three bills passed that relate directly to providing funding to make historic Ellicott City safe from flooding. HB 78 will make Ellicott City eligible for the existing Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, HB 539 enables the county to create a Resilience Authority as an alternate funding source, and finally HB 428 provides \$8,000,000 in this budget toward the county's Safe and Sound plan. Given the shortened session, it was remarkable that we were able to shepherd these bills through to passage. Please contact my office with questions about any of the bills mentioned here or any others on which you would like more information.

**A Note About the COVID-19 Impact**

State spending will surely be curtailed due to the impact of COVID-19 on our economy. What that looks like, and how much of an impact the virus will have on our state budget is something that will evolve over the next twelve months.

**Session Wrap Up Postponed**

We scheduled an end-of-session wrap up for the end of April at the Miller Branch Library as we did last year. However, it seemed prudent to postpone it considering the current Gubernatorial executive orders. We hope to have a community meeting as soon as we are safely able to do so.

**Wednesday, April 3rd** was the deadline to apply for a **District 9B higher education scholarship**.

Our office received over 60 applications from residents of District 9B for the House of Delegates Legislative Scholarship. We hope to stay on schedule and award the scholarships in May, though the process is dependent on the Maryland Higher Education Commission to administer the scholarships. All applicants will be apprised of any changes.

**Capital Budget - Support for Ellicott City**

[HB 428](#)

[Flood Mitigation Grant Fund - Support for Ellicott City](#)

\$8,000,000 awarded to Ellicott City for its [Safe and Sound Flood Mitigation Plan](#) (\$5 million in Strategic Demolition Funds and \$3 million in Comprehensive Flood Mitigation Grant Fund).

## District 9B Legislative Recap - Results for Ellicott City

- [HB 78](#)      Bay Restoration Fund - Authorized Uses (Primary Sponsor)  
This bill expands the criteria used to determine how to allocate funding from the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) Wastewater Account by including climate resiliency and flood control as issues for the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to consider when determining the priority of funding for specified projects.  
*Passed both chambers*
- [HB 539](#)      Local Governments - Resilience Authorities - Authorization (Primary Sponsor)  
This bill would enable counties and municipalities to create “Resilience authorities” for the purpose of issuing bonds to help critical resilience-related infrastructure projects.  
*Passed both chambers*
- Bond Bill**      Ho.Co. 27-20, Sidewalks and Streetscapes (Primary Sponsor)  
This project is intended to replace and reconstruct sidewalks and related streetscape along Main Street in Ellicott City. As a result of flash-flooding in 2016 and 2018, large portions of the sidewalks were damaged.

## Legislative Recap – Results for Howard County

- [HB 826](#)      Ho. Co. 02–20, Howard County – Residential Property and New Home Construction Advertisements – School District Information  
*Stalled in House Committee*
- [HB 1454](#)      Ho. Co. 26-20, Howard County - Transfer Tax - Rate Increase Authorization  
Enables the county to change the rate of the transfer tax if the county deems it necessary.  
*Passed both chambers*
- [HB 1510](#)      Ho. Co. 20-20, Income Tax - Subtraction Modification - Rental Subsidy Under the Howard County "Live Where You Work" Program  
*Passed both chambers*
- [HB 1511](#)      Ho. Co. 01-20, Howard County – Board of Education – Redetermination of Geographic Attendance Areas  
*Stalled in House Committee*
- [HB 1521](#)      Ho. Co. 04-20, Howard County – Sales of Residential Real Property – Notice of School District Boundary Changes  
*Stalled in House Committee*

## Legislative Recap - Selected Statewide Bills

### Consumer Protection

- [HB 304](#)      Consumer Protection - Unfair, Abusive, or Deceptive Trade Practices - Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults (Cosponsor)  
*Passed both chambers*
- [HB 431](#)      Motor Vehicle and Homeowners Insurance - Limiting Use of Claim History in Rating Policies (Primary Sponsor)  
*Passed both chambers*
- [HB 817](#)      Regulations Affecting Small Businesses – Certification of Comparable Local Regulation (Primary Sponsor for Senator Hester)  
*Passed both chambers*

### Environment

- [HB 209](#)      Plastic Bag Reduction Act (Cosponsor)  
*Passed the House, Second Reading in Senate (narrowly missed passage)*
- [HB 229](#)      Pesticides - Use of Chlorpyrifos - Prohibition Chlorpyrifos (Cosponsor)  
*Passed both chambers*

### Education

- [HB 1](#)      Built to Learn Act - Allowing Use of Stadium Authority Bonding for Building Schools  
*Passed both chambers*
- [HB 1300](#)      Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Implementation - This bill is based on the recommendation of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) that will transform the State's early childhood, primary and secondary education systems into a world class system.  
*Passed both chambers*

### Health

- [HB 3](#)      Business Regulation – Tobacco Products – Electronic Smoking Devices, Prohibition on Flavoring, and Sales to Military Members  
*Passed House, Stalled in Senate Committee*
- [HB 732](#)      Taxation – Tobacco Tax, Sales and Use Tax, and Digital Advertising Gross Revenues Tax  
*Passed both chambers*

[HB 847](#)      State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-related Needs (Cosponsor)  
*Passed both chambers unanimously*

[HB 1095](#)      Prescription Drug Affordability Board and Fund  
*Passed both chambers*

### **Gun Safety**

[HB 4](#)      Public Safety – Rifles and Shotguns - Sales, Rentals, and Transfers  
*Passed both chambers*

### **Public Works/Economic Development**

[SB 987](#)      Racing and Community Development Act of 2020  
*Passed both chambers*

[HB 1658](#)      Baltimore Symphony Orchestra--Funding and Reporting  
*Passed both chambers*

### **COVID-19 Emergency Bills**

In response to the COVID-19 public health threat, Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency to mobilize all resources necessary to respond to the threat. As part of the response, the Speaker of the House introduced legislation that allows the Governor to take specific actions to address the public health emergency.

[HB 1661](#)      Allows the Governor to transfer up to \$50 million from the state's Rainy Day Fund to mobilize necessary resources.  
*Passed both chambers*

[HB 1663](#)      Allows the Governor to take action to expand healthcare coverage, unemployment benefits and consumer protections for Maryland residents.  
*Passed both chambers*

On the last day of the session, the House and Senate amended the budget to allow the Governor to access up to \$100 million extra in funding to support small business and re-open hospitals during the COVID-19 crisis.

### **Bills with high level of interest which failed to make it out of committee:**

[HB 957](#)      Commercial Law - Maryland Net Neutrality Act of 2020

[HB 677](#)      Correctional Services - Immigration Detention - Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)

[HB 1545](#)      Electric Generation - Transition from Fossil Fuels - Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate and Transition Account

HB 839

Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment

While the 2020 Maryland Legislative Session will always be remembered for how it ended, much work was done on behalf of the citizens of District 9B and the State of Maryland. I am exceedingly proud of the four bills I sponsored and the thirteen bills I cosponsored which passed.

Visit <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Index/house> to look up any of the bills introduced during the 2020 session.

To let Governor Hogan know your thoughts on any of the passed bills that are now on his desk, you can email him at <https://governor.maryland.gov/contact-the-governor/>.

**In the Interim**

Please feel free to contact me throughout the year if I can assist you. Chief of Staff for the District 9B office is Terry Chaconas. You can reach either of us at the office number or email address below.

**Now is the time** to talk with us about anything you would like to see addressed in future legislation. I appreciate your input throughout the legislative session and encourage all feedback and suggestions. I look forward to seeing you in the Ellicott City restaurants, shops and businesses once the stay-at-home order is lifted.

Stay strong and healthy – we are in this together.

Sincerely,



**Delegate Courtney Watson**

Howard County District 9B  
Member, Economic Matters Committee  
Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus  
Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 350  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
301-858-3077  
Email: [Courtney.Watson@house.state.md.us](mailto:Courtney.Watson@house.state.md.us)  
Web: [mlis.state.md.us](http://mlis.state.md.us)