



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Felix Facchine, 410-313-2001
ffacchine@howardcountymd.gov

Councilmembers Mercer Rigby and Jung to Introduce Legislation Raising the School Facilities Surcharge on Developers

Ellicott City, MD (August 23, 2019) – Howard County Councilmembers Christiana Mercer Rigby and Deb Jung will introduce legislation in September that would raise the School Facilities Surcharge on newly-constructed residential units in Howard County. This authority was enabled by the Maryland General Assembly earlier this year through legislation introduced by Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary.

“Looking to the future, our public infrastructure projects must be adequately funded in Howard County,” said Mercer Rigby. “We are taking the opportunity to raise the School Facilities Surcharge, bringing Howard County in line with neighboring jurisdictions and funding school construction at the level we need.”

“We need to use every means available to fund school construction,” said Jung. “Howard County has had one of the fastest growing school systems in the state for the past 10 years, and there is an anticipated shortfall of tens of millions of dollars in capital funding every year. An increase in the School Facilities Surcharge will help fill that gap and provide relief for our overcrowding crisis.”

In Howard County, developers are currently charged \$1.32/square foot of occupiable area in new residential construction. While this fee has contributed to school construction funds in our county for 15 years, Howard County’s school impact fees are significantly lower than neighboring jurisdictions, including Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Frederick counties.

Mercer Rigby and Jung’s legislation will increase the School Facilities Surcharge from its current rate of \$1.32/square foot to a new rate of \$6.80/square foot. This increase is expected to raise over \$150 million in new funding for school construction, renovation, and maintenance over the next 10 years. The proposed increase is based on a market-rate analysis of neighboring jurisdictions, as well as the projected capital funding needs of the Howard County Public School System.

“As an educator I understand the importance of a robust education system. I believe this legislation is a necessity for all of Howard County; addressing the increasing problem with overcrowding, deferred school maintenance, and strengthening continuous residential development would increase the school facilities assessed surcharge,” said Dr. Jones. “Moreover, this legislation will provide sufficient assistance to stabilize, enhance, and promote our nationally ranked schools.”

“It’s time for developers to pay their fair share for public facilities, including new seats in schools,” said Walsh. “I thank my colleagues Chair Mercer Rigby and Council Member Jung for their work on this long-overdue legislation.”

As Howard County continues to experience increases in student enrollment each year, these additional capital dollars will address a much-needed deficit in school construction and renovation funding. This legislation will be co-sponsored by Councilmembers Dr. Opel Jones and Liz Walsh.

The proposed legislation was pre-filed on August 23, 2019 and will be introduced at the Council’s legislative session on Tuesday, September 3, 2019. Testimony will be accepted at the legislative public hearing on Monday, September 16, 2019. Howard County residents can sign up to testify after September 3 by visiting <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/otestimony/>. If you would like to submit your testimony electronically, please email councilmail@howardcountymd.gov.

To read the legislation, visit <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Legislation>

###

(410) 313-2001

fax: (410) 313-3297

<http://cc.howardcountymd.gov>