

My name is Steve McKay, 3810 Shakespeare Way, Monrovia, and I am here speaking in support of Bill No. 15-12 to modify permitted uses in our County's waterbody buffer zones. I was also proud to sign my name, on behalf of RALE, on the letter you have received from the Smarter Growth Alliance for Frederick, also supporting this bill. I know that you have heard and will hear many voices smarter than mine on environment issues, so I will focus my comments on a small but very important aspect of this bill.

Water is essential for life. We can all agree on this can't we? I mean seriously, even the most intransigent members among you should still agree on this basic fact that water is essential to life. It goes then, that the provision of clean, safe drinking water is an essential service that our County government performs. Again, this shouldn't be subject to dispute. This is why I would strongly urge you to amend the language in paragraph three of the bill. Rather than stating that the Council believes it is "necessary and appropriate and in the best interests of the citizens of Frederick County", I strongly urge you to say that it is "essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Frederick County."

This isn't just hyperbole. I am suggesting this for a reason. There are what – about 13 approved DRRAs out there now? That's thirteen developments and thirteen sets of developers that will be able to safely ignore what you're attempting to do tonight. That's exactly why those DRRAs were written as broadly as they were, to freeze out nearly every potential change that you and future County governments could enact that might impact their bottom line.

These developments include Blentlinger, Casey, and Linganore that sit astride the sensitive watershed for Lake Linganore – a critical water resource that provides over 40% of the drinking water to the City of Frederick. So tonight, you can make these changes – and they are certainly positive and very much worthwhile to do. However, if you really want to impact some critical areas, and to undo some of the damage done in the last four years, then you must find that these proposed changes are indeed essential to the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Frederick County. Afterall, what is more essential to life than water itself.

Respectfully,

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