



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

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**For Immediate Release:**

### **Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Walsh, and Jung Statement on County Executive Ball's CB11-2019 Veto**

*Ellicott City, MD* – On April 1, 2019, CB11-2019 was passed by the County Council, amending Howard County's Scenic Road Ordinance to expand protections for Howard County's remaining scenic roads. On April 8, 2019, County Executive Ball issued a veto of CB11-2019. The Scenic Roads legislation was supported by Councilmembers Christiana Mercer Rigby, Liz Walsh, and Deb Jung.

Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Walsh, and Jung introduced CB11-2019 with the goal of further protecting and safeguarding Howard County's scenic roads. This legislation took concrete steps to address deficiencies with the current scenic roads standards, including increasing the vegetative buffer between scenic roads and developments from 35 feet to 100 feet and providing improving screening when natural areas are harmed by development. This increase would bring Howard County in line with best practices across the state of Maryland to protect scenic roads.

During the Council's legislative session on April 1, CB11-2019 was also amended to give higher levels of scrutiny to projects planned along scenic roads by putting them before the Planning Board. With only a few scenic roads in eastern Howard County, these amendments added a further level of review and public input to the approval process of these projects. Furthermore, these amendments improved transparency in the approval process by requiring more information from developers and adding evaluation criteria for the Planning Board related to scenic roads.

While there were amendments introduced by Councilmembers, both the amendments to CB11-2019 and the amendments to those amendments fell within the normal legislative process of the County Council. Many of the amendments to this legislation were drafted after receiving feedback on the initial bill from subject matter experts, including the Department of Planning and Zoning, at the County Council's legislative Work Session.

"Throughout this process, I have worked with the community and my colleagues on the Council to address the feedback we received on CB11-2019," said Mercer Rigby. "While I am disappointed with County Executive Ball's veto, I see this as an opportunity to continue advocating for the protection of scenic roads in our county."

"The bill sponsors remain deeply committed to protecting the most vulnerable environmental and historic resources in our county," said Walsh.

"The Scenic Roads bill, which County Executive Ball vetoed, is similar in substance to CB58-2018 that Councilmember Ball introduced with Councilmember Jen Terrasa last year," said Jung. "Our bill is climate-friendly and increases environmental protections. That's what's important to Howard County citizens."

This bill represents a significant and necessary step forward in protecting Howard County's scenic roads, which remains a top priority to Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Walsh, and Jung. The three Councilmembers look forward to continuing to advocate for this bill, refine the details, and reintroduce this legislation in the future.

A vote to override County Executive Ball's veto will be held on Monday, May 6, 2019 during the Council's Legislative Session. If you would like to read the full text of CB11-2019 as passed by the County Council, you can find it online here: <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/olis/LegislationDetail.aspx?LegislationID=12217>.

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