



P.O. Box 142 ★ Sykesville, MD 21784

July 24, 2002

Julia W. Gouge, President, Carroll County Board of Commissioners
Robin B. Frazier, Commissioner
Donald I. Dell, Commissioner
Carroll County Office Building
225 N. Center Street
Westminster, MD 21157

RE: Freedom and Finksburg Growth Recommendations

Dear Commissioners:

We applaud the recent efforts of the eight municipalities, who have come together to express to you their concerns and recommendations surrounding the unchecked rate of growth in the county. The Freedom Area Citizens' Council (FACC) and the Finksburg Planning Area Council (FPAC) as representative voices of both the Freedom and Finksburg community planning areas (CPAs) are similarly united in expressing our recommendations for immediate actions which should be taken to stem growth and protect our quality of life:

1. Close Current Zoning Loopholes.

The conservation zone was originally intended to protect environmentally sensitive land, but is now a magnet for development outside intended growth areas. A recent Baltimore Regional Partnership study of the county's own permit data show that 58% of residential development is expected to come from outside priority funding areas (PFAs) through 2020. In addition, conditional uses on industrial land have restricted opportunities for expansion of our industrial tax base, hampering our efforts to attract industrial employers and limiting meaningful economic development. The conservation zone should be at least as protective as the agriculture zone and conditional uses should be removed altogether from industrial land.

2. Relieve our Schools by Capping Growth and Raising Impact Fees

Year after year the Board of Commissioners continues to be unable to fund the proposed school budget and as a result, schools continue to have declining test scores and to be overcrowded. Carroll's future school construction budget is now dependent on building at least 950 houses per year -- the same rate of growth that has our schools bursting at the seams. As such, we recommend growth limits be set substantially below the current paper goal of 1,000 units per year and impact fees raised to make up for the difference in revenue.

3. Cancel the Piney Run Water Treatment Plant

There has been no recent environmental impact study to support Piney Run's use as a viable drinking water source. Missing reservoir watershed protections and data detailing the actual water yield available (derived by subtracting possible yields from what is going over the Piney Run dam every day), demonstrate that the county has not ascertained whether there is even enough available yield to justify a water treatment plant. It is fiscally irresponsible to spend \$16 million for a new water treatment plant, when a 30% increase in existing water capacity is readily available and can be attained for as little as \$1.6 million (wells).

4. Sign the Watershed Protection Agreement

Recent monitoring data from Liberty Reservoir has shown chloride pollution levels roughly doubling over the past decade -- pollution that is linked to commercial and industrial development in the watershed area, which is inversely proportional to the amount of agricultural land. It is important that we assure all affected citizens of our resolve to protect our valuable water supply and open up logical negotiations with Baltimore City to relieve our current water supply crisis through an increased water draw from Liberty Reservoir.



P.O. Box 142 ★ Sykesville, MD 21784

5. Revisit the County Master Plan

Many of the recommendations above involve changes to the county's current Master Plan. The County should re-evaluate the Master Plan to make it possible to manage our runaway growth, relieve the pressure on our critical resources like police, fire and rescue, while at the same time preserve what is special about Carroll County. The failed Concurrency Management Ordinance must be eliminated and replaced by an ordinance consistent with the mandates of Maryland's Zoning and Planning Law (Article 66B).

Sincerely,

Ross A. Dangel, Chairman
Freedom Area Citizens' Council

Deborah Ridgely, President
Finksburg Planning Area Council