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CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Cecil County Citizens:

I appreciate the opportunity to continue to provide technical information and further justification of my intent to move forward with Cecil County Sanitary District Policy Memorandum #2 regarding mandatory connection to the County sanitary sewer system. I am aware of some who criticize my decision. I believe their criticism is not accurate and definitely not supportive of the Cecil County Strategic Plan adopted by the County Council in 2014.

As it currently stands vis-à-vis the County's connection policy, there is no method available to landowners to avoid immediate connection mandate once the sewer main is complete if that is the determination of the County. This is based upon several facets of State and County regulations. First, Md. Code Ann., Title 9 (Water, Ice, & Sanitary Facilities), Subtitle 6 (Sanitary Commissions), Part VI (Operation of Districts), § 9-661 (Connection to system), provides that, "[w]hen construction on the water line or sewer line is complete, the sanitary commission (meaning, the County Executive) shall notify each abutting property owner of the completion; on receipt of the notice of completion, and by a time set by the Sanitary Commission [County Executive], each owner of abutting property shall (1) pay the connection charge determined under this section, and (2) make appropriate connections of the plumbing system on the property to the connector constructed by the sanitary commission [County].". Second, Chapter 97, Article I, §97-12 of the Code of Cecil County states "when any sewer is declared by the County complete and ready for the reception of sewage, every abutting property owner, after due notice, shall make a connection of all toilets and waste drains with said sewer within the time prescribed by the County and in the manner prescribed by such rules and regulations as may be promulgated by the Director of Sanitary Facilities". Finally, Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1L of the Cecil County Master Water & Sewer Plan states that *individual sewer systems are interim in nature, and connection to a community system shall be made when such system becomes available.*

Accordingly, it is incontrovertible that lacking a policy such as has been proposed, severe hardship such as has been expressed by members of Council could be perpetrated upon landowners adjacent to the sewer lines by the County compelling them to immediately connect. Obviously, such precipitative action is what I seek to avoid through the enactment of Policy Memorandum #2. My goal is to provide landowners with a practical, affordable, and fiscally responsible solution to assist with the abandonment of individual onsite sewage systems and to provide a reasonable and responsible method to connect to the public sewer. As this process moves forward, individual home owners who have extenuating circumstances impacting their ability to comply with this policy will have ample opportunity to sit down with members of my staff to work out a feasible solution sensitive to their needs while complying with state law.

It should also be noted that the establishment of County sewer in our designated growth area and the connection thereto will permit realization of the goals and objectives of our Comprehensive Plan and as stated previously, the Strategic Plan. This key infrastructure component will permit the County to focus the majority of our future growth, whether that be residential, commercial, or industrial in the growth area. This will decrease the stress and fragmentation of our rural areas and will foster greater economic development opportunities to expand our tax base and provide employment opportunities for our citizens. Additionally, the expansion and utilization of the County's sewer system will reap untold environmental benefits as the sewage effluent will be treated to the highest standards at an Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) wastewater treatment plant instead of in an onsite septic system. This will significantly contribute to the effort to enhance the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay.

The need for installing the necessary infrastructure components within the growth has been discussed for decades. The County has lost millions of dollars through the loss of businesses prospects who chose to locate elsewhere. We must build a twenty-first Century workforce and provide meaningful, high paying jobs right here versus the significant out-of-county commute that occurs daily. Some might say it's an expensive proposition. I say not nearly as expensive as the failure to act if we don't move forward now with determination.

Being elected leaders in a small county in this rapidly changing living environment is challenging and difficult. We are all readily available to criticism regardless of our actions. Someone always can disagree with every decision and move we make. I accepted that scenario when I ran for public office and was fortunate to be elected twice. As a council member and now as county executive I believe that we must be guided by what is in the best interest of the future of Cecil County to not only sustain but to improve the quality of life for every citizen. We need to invest in the long overdue infrastructure while assisting and guiding our citizens in the part each plays in ensuring a high quality, nurturing environment to live and raise our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for allowing me to share my views on this critically important matter. Moving forward with the recommendations of Policy Memorandum #2 is the best and right thing to do. I hope I can count on your support as we move forward.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan J. McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan J. McCarthy
County Executive