



# Government Affairs Newsletter

February 4, 2025

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## LOWER EASTERN SHORE ACTIVITY

Hi All,

Lobby Day is almost here! we are going to have a bus take us all to Annapolis. I'm working on the logistics for that so please stay tuned!

We'll discuss talking points on our way there, I have a call with MR this week on the topic so I'll have more details to follow.

Dress sharp and make a great impression! We'll have MR's talking points but it's good to remember the Lower Shore's problems too. When we're in the room with our Delegates and Senator it'll be great to share our concerns as REALTORS and citizens.

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## **R-1 UPDATE**

Current Status:

Occupancy, “Three Strikes” Designated Local Person, Redefinition of Family.

- Passed Second Reading.

Moratorium on new R-1 and MH licenses, retroactive to January 27th, 2025. Ending on December 31, 2025. 2024 R-1 and MH rental license holders can renew for 2025.

- Passed as an Emergency Ordinance. Effective immediately.

Minimum Length-of-Stay of five nights in R-1 and MH, effective for the 2025 rental license year, bookings made prior to 3:30PM on 1/28/2024 will be honored regardless of length-of-stay.

- Passed First Reading. Will be on Second Reading on 2/17 (or 2/18 depending on if City Hall is closed for Presidents’ Day).



## WINDMILL UPDATE

Ocean City is joining Worcester County's "anti-wind" PR campaign by agreeing to contribute \$100,000 to these efforts.

This comes a couple of weeks after the county has agreed to purchase the West Ocean City properties which will serve as a staging ground for offshore wind construction. That is the first step toward using eminent domain to acquire those properties, preventing U.S. Wind from using them, and stalling this project.

[Click here to view Worcester County's latest update on their efforts in West Ocean City.](#)

Sussex County also denied a permit to U.S. Wind for a location to use for power storage.

[View an article related to this decision here.](#)

An Executive Order was signed January 20th halting the permitting of new offshore wind projects and is effective January 21st. This does not impact existing leasing areas (which would include the 114 turbines off OCMD's coast), but the executive order did express the White House's plans to stop those existing leases.

In reference to existing projects and leases, the Executive Order states this, "Nothing in this withdrawal affects rights under existing leases in the withdrawn areas. With respect to such existing leases, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Attorney General as needed, shall conduct a comprehensive review of the ecological, economic, and environmental necessity of terminating or amending any existing wind energy leases, identifying any legal bases for such removal, and submit a report with recommendations to the President, through the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy."

[Please click here to view the Executive Order as written and signed.](#)

MDE is accepting public comment on the Ocean City wind project until March 17th and comments can be sent to [shannon.heafey@maryland.gov](mailto:shannon.heafey@maryland.gov).



## SALISBURY

### **Density Changes:**

Salisbury Council voted 4-1 to approved the doubling of density from 40 to 80 units per acre in the downtown Central Business District.

This was vetoed by Salisbury's Mayor who stressed his concerns over the impact this would have on the downtown area.

Las Monday the Council overrode the Mayoral veto in what was an invigorating Council meeting.

The Mayor was not permitted an opportunity to speak on his veto by the Council President, so he went to the podium during the public comment to share his position as a citizen. This issue of density and parking has the town split, and there have been multiple disturbances during Council meetings.

Salisbury Council is also considering shortening the public comment to two minutes. However, the public can only comment one time, a change from their ability to comment on all agenda items. Now citizens must address their comment to an agenda item, and may not provide more comment during that work or legislative session. One could formerly comment on all agenda items at the time of that agenda item.

The Council President may also limit the times or time one speaks publicly.

This discussion has been tabled.



# Somerset County

## ***SOMERSET COUNTY UPDATE***

I'm seeing no new news for Somerset County.

# Legislative Session Update

## **MARYLAND REALTORS EFFORTS**

The 2025 Maryland General Assembly is underway!

[Click here to view Maryland REALTORS Advocacy page.](#)

As bills are issued, MR compiles legislation that is relevant to our business. Bills are evaluated by their legislative committee and leadership and given a grade: Support, Oppose, Monitor, or No Position. Support and Oppose are given a level of urgency, one through five, which equates to the amount of advocacy necessary for each.

The link above allows you to follow along as each bill comes with a synopsis, a link to the bill page (which has its bill text and calendar dates for hearings), and MR's position.

Please reach out if you have any questions about the legislation MR is tracking. I follow these closely and will do my best to explain what each bill does.

We are getting more and more bills coming in. Several are dealing with septic, HB 671, HB131, and SB 117.