



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

DATE: 02/22/2024

WORCESTER COUNTY:

Ocean City: Officials from planning and the city council will meet to discuss the proposed rental license requirements on 2/27/24. The main focus will be the regulations and rules regarding short- and long-term rentals. Some members of the council want landlords to get both licenses if they change rental terms depending on the market. Parking requirements will also be discussed.

Ocean City: The offshore wind debate has continued to be front and center for the Town of Ocean City. The city council has released a letter rejecting the proposed financial package from US Wind. While several Delaware beach towns have accepted the structured \$10 Million package the mayor and city council have declined the offer in an open letter.

While the town has been steadfastly against the offshore wind project the general assembly and governors' office have doubled down on their efforts to bring offshore wind to Ocean City. The federal government and our federal representatives apart from Congressman Andy Harris(R-1) have echoed the positions of the general assembly and governor. A bill will be introduced into the rules committee to create more incentives for the projects.

Northern Worcester: The county has worked with the state to create more Rural Legacy Area program areas(RLA). This program aims to protect farm land from development by allowing easements and other tax incentives to help farmers keep their farms open and undeveloped. This will lead to increased limitations to future land sales in the northern end of the county.



WICOMICO COUNTY: Secretary Jake Day, the former Mayor of Salisbury and now Secretary of Housing and Community Development gave his departments opinions at the legislative day panel the Maryland Association of Realtors hosted. Secretary Day has brought many of his ideas to Annapolis and has pledged to increase housing availability in Maryland. Some of the suggestions that the Secretary made will be controversial do to the fact that it will remove some powers from local governments.

MARYLAND: The general assembly is at the 44th day of the 2024 session. This year the General Assembly has had an unprecedented number of bills. As of this writing there are over 3500 bills filed with more on the way that are destined for the rules committee. The previous year the general assembly had 2800 bills submitted. This massive influx of new bills has caused a backup, committee assignments have been slowed down to a crawl. This overload has also meant that simple housekeeping and non-controversial bills have languished without a vote. There is talk of eliminating or limiting testimony has been brought up as well as breaking some discussion down to just sub committees. What this will mean is that we will have a relative lull as the members digest this massive amount of bills as soon as most redundant or unpopular bills are culled out, these committees will be powering through these bills at a breakneck speed. We could have very little notice before a hearing or, if the committee chairman feels it's warranted, bring up a bill on short notice.