



ROBERT G. CASSILLY

Harford County Executive

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 6, 2023

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Harford Executive Cassilly Proposes Legislation Restricting Size of New Warehouses to 250K Square Feet

BEL AIR, Md., (Sept. 6, 2023) - Harford County Executive Bob Cassilly has proposed legislation that would limit the size of new warehouses to 250K square feet and add new restrictions on large warehouse development.

[The county executive's legislation](#) was introduced at Tuesday's County Council meeting and will have a public hearing on October 2, 2023.

Soon after his inauguration, County Executive Cassilly initiated a moratorium on the development of new warehouses to give his administration time to review and potentially update the county's related zoning and adequate public facilities regulations. Existing regulations were developed before modern large warehouses, which can exceed 1 million square feet, were envisioned.

The county executive's proposed legislation allows warehousing, distribution, and local delivery development between 150K and 250K square feet in the commercial industrial, light industrial and general industrial use districts subject to special conditions. Those special conditions include height restrictions, minimum lot requirements, impervious surface limits, and a 100-foot buffer if the property abuts a residential or agricultural district.

The legislation also mandates that necessary infrastructure, such as road improvements, be in place before construction can begin.


The Cassilly administration’s analysis during the moratorium period indicates that large warehouses have an oversized safety and environmental impact with limited economic benefits, making them ill-suited for areas of the County where they are proposed for construction. These facilities place a very high volume of interstate trucks on local roads. They also replace large tracts of undeveloped land with impervious surface that significantly increases runoff into area streams and depletes the water table. The jobs created tend to be low-skill and low-wage and, with limited property available for commercial development, these projects compete for space with other commercial uses that offer greater benefits to the community. High vacancy rates for large warehouse distribution centers also raise concerns, given the difficulty in redeveloping, repurposing, and removing such huge structures. Overall, the nature of their operation has a substantial adverse impact on traffic, public safety, and quality of life for nearby residents that are not offset by equally substantial economic gains.

By contrast, smaller warehouses attract industry, create a variety of skilled labor jobs, and are more marketable and more readily redeveloped and repurposed if needed.

“Our citizens have made it clear that they do not want unrestrained growth,” County Executive Bob Cassilly said. “This update to our development regulations clarifies ambiguous language in existing law, adds conditions for responsible development and is, frankly, long overdue. My administration’s goal is to fairly balance the rights of property owners with the interests of citizens who live and work in the surrounding community.”

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