



ROBERT G. CASSILLY

Harford County Executive

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Harford Executive Cassilly Opposes Bill Opening 232 Parcels Countywide to Become Liquor Stores, Cannabis Dispensaries

BEL AIR, Md. (Dec. 11, 2024) – In a December 9 letter to the Harford County Council, County Executive Bob Cassilly expressed “strong opposition” to proposed legislation that allows liquor stores, and therefore, recreational cannabis dispensaries, in any of the 232 parcels that are zoned B-1 countywide.

B-1 zoning is intended for uses that support residential neighborhoods, such as community centers, daycare centers, libraries and parks.

Bill 24-037 is County Council Member Aaron Penman’s second attempt to allow liquor stores in residential communities. An earlier bill included liquor stores as a permitted use with no special requirements for parcels zoned B-1, but it faced opposition and was withdrawn.

The latest effort allows liquor stores in B-1 districts as a special exception, but with minimal criteria for approval focused on signage. As such, applications that include proper signage will satisfy the code.

“This legislation is an end run around what community members and I opposed the first time it was tried,” County Executive Bob Cassilly said. “The reality is, Bill 24-037 allows liquor stores with ‘special’ requirements that are easily met, meaning that any of 232 parcels serving residential areas throughout the county could become a liquor store. To make matters worse, the [State of Maryland has been very clear](#) that recreational cannabis use cannot be treated more restrictively than liquor sales. This opens the

door for cannabis sales to be allowed anywhere liquor stores are permitted. I am disappointed that Council Member Penman is again attempting to set a dangerous precedent that liquor stores and cannabis sales are compatible with family-oriented neighborhoods."

Bill 24-037 had a public hearing last night. The County Council plans to vote on the bill at their next meeting on December 17, 2024.

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