



ALLEGANY COUNTY, MARYLAND

The Board of County Commissioners

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November 7, 2019

William E. (Brit) Kirwan, Ph.D.
Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education
c/o Office of Policy Analysis
Department of Legislative Services
90 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Dr. Kirwan:

We, the undersigned members of the Board of County Commissioners, would like to express our concern regarding the proposed actions and recommendations made by the Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education ("Kirwan Commission"). Based on the figures we have been provided, and should the Commission's recommendations be approved, the County's overall spending for education will grow from \$30.7 million currently to \$38 million by FY 2030. This \$8 million increase in county funding over the next nine budget years would require a 16% tax increase to county residents over the same timeframe.

Over the last several local budget cycles, revenues grew modestly as approximately 1% annually. As you may know, Allegany County has recently experienced a number of setbacks with the closure of Verso Corporation's paper mill. The mill was in operation for over 131 years. To put this in perspective, the Baltimore Sun's Editorial Board described the closure as "a shock to the system, on par with Baltimore County losing the Social Security Administration or T. Rowe Price." As this community continues to rebuild after the loss, the exorbitant price tag that is accompanying your Commission's recommendations would be devastating. With this recent setback, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to fund without tax increases or budget reductions in other areas.

Please take into account the rural communities that continue to slowly recover from the Great Recession as you continue your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Jacob C. Shade, President

Creade V. Brodie Jr.

David J. Caporale