

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee

FROM:  Michael Faden, Senior Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: **Worksession:** Expedited Bill 5-09, Permit Fees – New Construction - Deferral

Expedited Bill 5-09, Permit Fees – New Construction - Deferral, sponsored by the Council President at the request of the County Executive, was introduced on February 10, 2009.

Summary As introduced, Bill 5-09 would allow applicants to defer payment of certain Department of Permitting Services (DPS) permit, inspection, license, and engineering fees for 12 months. It also would extend the time limit before a building permit is treated as abandoned from 6 to 12 months after the permit was issued and the deadline to record the initial building inspection with DPS from 12 to 18 months and the second inspection from 14 to 20 months after the permit was issued. The fee deferral authority would apply starting 60 days after this Bill becomes law until the Bill sunsets on April 1, 2010 -- that is, anyone obligated to pay a covered fee during that period could defer payment for 12 months, even if the deferral would extend after April 1, 2010. The fee ultimately paid would be calculated, we presume, at the rate and terms which applied when it was originally due.¹

Fiscal impact Assuming, as OMB does, that 75% of the covered fees would be deferred, the County's cost in lost interest would be about \$200,000, with an estimated added administrative cost of about \$37,000, which DPS is expected to absorb (see fiscal impact statement, ©9-10).

Hearing A public hearing was held on March 3 (see testimony, ©11-29), along with Bills 3-09 and 4-09. The testimony provided by Executive staff and business interests unanimously supported this Bill, but no civic or taxpayer representative appeared at the hearing and the County Civic Federation submitted testimony (see ©23-24) which raised several salient questions. The Civic Federation noted the irony that, while the Executive's 11-point Economic Assistance Plan (see ©13) calls for "an economic and fiscal analysis as part of any legislative or regulatory change", this Bill was not accompanied by any economic analysis.²

¹If this Bill moves forward, Council staff will propose a technical amendment to make this conclusion clear.

²The Hillandale Citizens Association submitted testimony (see ©25-29) which technically may fall within the Bill's scope of advertising but raises a non-fee issue (construction fencing). The Civic Federation also mentioned this issue (see ©24). Council staff recommends that the construction fencing issue be considered in another context unless, as the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce proposed, the time periods to complete building permit

First worksession The Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee worksession on this Bill, scheduled for March 9, was shortened after Executive staff asked for more time to try to work out several issues surrounding the proposed fee deferral agreement and lien with representatives of the development community.

Executive amendments On April 8 Executive staff advised Council staff that, after discussions with representatives of the development community, the Executive wants to withdraw those parts of Bill 5-09 that would defer certain permit fees but retain those provisions that would extend certain building permit time limits. The revised version of Bill 5-09 on ©1-6 incorporates these Executive amendments.

Fee Deferral Issues

1) Cost/benefit analysis: What difference would deferring these fees make?

Council staff can think of two valid public interests that could be served by deferring development fees in a severe economic recession:

- Send a signal of sympathy and support to hard-pressed development firms and their owners and employees.
- Stimulate, to some degree, a revival of development in the County.

The first reason (the need to “do something” to show that government understands how dire the situation is) presents a pure policy choice: would the symbolic value of this public gesture outweigh the attendant loss of revenue? This is a value judgment that is made first by County policy-makers, and eventually by the taxpayers who foot the bill.

The second reason (to stimulate more development) allows a more reasoned cost/benefit analysis, albeit in a general way since precise data on development decision-making in recessions has not been provided and the ultimate answer may be equal parts fact and conjecture. Much of the testimony on this Bill documents the severity of the current construction recession, which no one disputes. However, while supporters of this Bill assume, without demonstrating, that deferring County permit fees, alone or in combination with other stimulative measures, will cause some number of developers or builders to take actions that are not now economically feasible, they have not offered any evidence that such a result would follow.³ As recent news reports underscore, the building industry recession appears to be caused primarily by cutbacks in occupant demand and unavailability of financing. Neither of these factors would be directly affected by a deferral of County permit fees, particularly when those fees are a relatively small part of any developer’s carrying costs. Thus, in our view, in purely cost/benefit terms, a

inspections are substantially lengthened; in that case, these construction fencing issues would be more relevant to this Bill.

³See, e.g., testimony from the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce on ©15: “Presumably the legislation is designed to create construction industry jobs, which have all but disappeared in the current economic crisis.” These kinds of assumptions are far from evidence-based decision-making.

persuasive case has not been made to defer any County fees. **Council staff recommendation:** do not enact this part of the Bill.

At the hearing Councilmember Leventhal raised a related question which may be more important for the impact tax deferral which Bill 4-09 proposes but is also germane to this Bill: why should the County spend money to stimulate new housing demand when large numbers of existing houses remain unsold?⁴ This inventory upsurge is a natural part of the housing construction cycle, and in staff's view the County has no particular interest in stimulating or meeting demand for *new* housing as distinct from housing generally (and in fact may have an environmental interest in maximizing use of existing housing units before new units are built). One option would be to amend this Bill to allow only fees for large commercial projects to be deferred.

2) Length of deferral period – when is payment due? In testimony presented at the hearing, business representatives proposed that the deferral period – the time during which the specified permit fees would be postponed – be lengthened from the proposed 12 months until whenever the building is ready for occupancy. Readiness for occupancy would be measured by the issuance of a “final permit” – either a certificate of use and occupancy or, for those buildings (mainly single-family homes) which do not require a certificate, a final inspection report. The argument for extending the payment due date, made most succinctly by the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce on ©21, is that “By allowing deferral to a point in the development process that is tied to sale and transfer, builders can conserve capital and delay out-of-pocket costs. This also defers the payment to a point in time when the applicant is likely to have money coming in with which to make the payment. Further, the cost of the payment will not become an additional part of the financing costs during construction.”

The effect of this amendment would be to postpone County receipt of these fees for an indefinite time. This time could be less than 12 months if a building is completed earlier, or it could be never if construction is abandoned. Under the current law (see e.g. §8-26(a)), any required permits cannot be issued until all fees due are paid. This assures that the County will not perform the reviews necessary to evaluate and approve a development without being compensated, which is an especially critical factor when the permit operation is funded through a self-supporting enterprise fund, as much of DPS' operations is. As this Bill is drafted, the applicant would not pay interest during the deferral period but would pay interest on any fee that remains unpaid after the deferral period ends (see ©4-5, lines 76-80).

If a deferral is accepted in principle but 12 months seems too short, an alternative would be a longer specific time frame such as 18 or 24 months. Otherwise, this issue could be revisited in a year to see if the construction outlook has materially improved; if not, payment of fees that would come due then could be further postponed. **Council staff recommendation:** if deferral is allowed, limit the deferral period to 12 months, with further review next year.

3) Length of deferral applicability – Bill's sunset date Business representatives at the hearing also proposed that the Bill's sunset date be extended from April 1, 2010, to April 1, 2013. In other words, anyone obligated to pay a covered fee during the next 4 years could defer

⁴See the data in the Maryland-National Capital Building Industry Association testimony on ©19.

payment for 12 months (or whatever deferral period is selected; see previous issue), even if the deferral would extend after April 1, 2013. Needless to say, extending the Bill's sunset date would further postpone County receipt of these fees and further deplete DPS' enterprise fund. Since DPS would continue to operate and issue permits (to the extent applications are received), tax funds presumably would be allocated to pay these expenses.

As with the immediately previous issue, no one has any real idea whether the County construction outlook will be significantly better, significantly worse, or unchanged by early 2010. In Council staff's view, the most prudent approach (assuming a deferral is accepted) is to limit it to the next year and reevaluate the situation then. **Council staff recommendation:** keep the early 2010 sunset date.

4) Defer small fees? Business representatives suggested that the Bill's exclusion from deferral of fees under \$400 (see ©3, lines 47-48) be deleted – in other words, that an applicant could defer payment of any fee, no matter how small. Needless to say, this would allow ordinary applicants (non-builders) to defer many relatively low fees but seriously complicate DPS' administrative burden. **Council staff recommendation:** if deferral is allowed, retain (if not increase) the \$400 floor.

5) Payment guarantees Business representatives objected to the Bill's requirements that each applicant sign a deferral agreement and consent to a lien on the property before any fee can be deferred. They argued that lenders would balk at both these requirements, and suggested that simply retaining the authority to withhold any final occupancy permit would effectively guarantee payment of any fees. Executive staff responded that the agreement would be a simple, standard document which would not require any negotiation, and they and the County Attorney will reexamine the need for both the lien and the agreement. Executive staff scheduled further discussions with business representatives and land-use lawyers after this packet went to print but before this worksession.

Council staff would not recommend dropping either requirement unless the County Attorney is totally comfortable that any transferee of the property would have no way to avoid paying any fees due. We are not sure why a lender should have any problem with a lien, since they are used to dealing with property tax liens. **Council staff recommendation:** retain the lien and deferral agreement requirements unless the County Attorney agrees that they are not needed.

Remaining Issue -- Building Permit Extensions

6) Building permit extensions As amended by the Executive, the remaining part of Bill 5-09 would extend the time limit before a building permit is treated as abandoned from 6 to 12 months after the permit was issued, and the deadline to record the initial building inspection with DPS from 12 to 18 months and the second inspection from 14 to 20 months after the permit was issued. See ©2-3, lines 3-30. These provisions were intended to sunset in 2010 (see ©5-6, lines 103-127).

The purpose of these extensions is to allow more time to finish buildings which run into construction or financial delays. However, as the Civic Federation and the Hillandale Citizens Association pointed out on ©23-29, allowing a construction site more time to remain unfinished could pose safety hazards and increase neighborhood blight. Those impacts could be exacerbated if, as the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce proposed (see ©22), these inspection deadlines are further extended by another 6 months beyond what this Bill proposed.

Under the current law (see County Code §8-25(b)(2)-(3)) DPS can extend an issued building permit's expiration date for 6 months (and, if the project is located in an enterprise zone, for an unlimited number of 6-month periods if good cause is shown). The reason the Silver Spring Chamber gave to further extend the inspection deadline was "to avoid multiple extension requests". In Council staff's view, no clear case has been made to loosen DPS' control over building permit extensions; in fact, we have not seen any data showing that extension requests have increased. **Council staff recommendation:** temporarily extend each building permit deadline for 6 months, sunseting in 2010.

<u>This packet contains</u>	<u>Circle</u>
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Expedited Bill No. 5-09
Concerning: [[Permit Fees - New Construction - Deferral]] Building Permits - Extensions
Revised: 4-9-09 Draft No. 3
Introduced: February 10, 2009
Expires: August 10, 2010
Enacted: _____
Executive: _____
Effective: _____
Sunset: See § ~~[[2]] 3~~
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council President at the Request of the County Executive

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

- (1) ~~[[authorize the deferral of certain permit, inspection, license, and engineering fee payments for a certain period;]]~~
- (2) temporarily extend the time limit for abandonment of a building permit;
- (3) temporarily extend the time ~~[[for recording]]~~ to record an initial building inspection; and
- (4) generally amend the laws regarding permits ~~[[and related fees]]~~.

By amending

Montgomery County Code
Chapter 8, Buildings
Sections 8-24 and 8-25

~~[[By adding~~

~~Chapter 2, Administration
Section 2-42C]]~~

Boldface	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
[Single boldface brackets]	<i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>
<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

28 approved inspection is not recorded in the Department's
 29 inspection history file within [14] 20 months after the
 30 permit is issued; or

31 * * *

32 **[[2-42C. Permit fees -new construction - deferrals.**

33 (a) Definitions. In this section the following words have the meanings
 34 indicated:

35 (1) Fee or Fees mean any permit fee, license fee, inspection fee, or
 36 engineering fee required to be paid before a permit or license is
 37 issued or an inspection is made under Chapter 8, 17, 19, 27A, or
 38 49.

39 (2) New Construction means:

40 (A) any new building; and

41 (B) any addition or renovation of an existing building that
 42 replaces 50% or more of the existing first floor exterior
 43 walls, measured around the perimeter of the building.

44 (3) Owner means a person who has legal record title to the real
 45 property on which the new construction is proposed.

46 (b) Authorization to Defer. An owner or other applicant may defer
 47 payment of a fee associated with new construction, if the fee exceeds
 48 \$400 and all other requirements of this Section are met, for 12 months
 49 after the fee is otherwise due.

50 (c) Conditions of Deferral.

51 (1) An owner must apply for deferral of a fee to the Director on a
 52 form supplied by the Department.

53 (2) As part of the application, the owner must execute a written
 54 agreement with the Director. The agreement must provide that

55 the owner consents to all terms and conditions of the deferral,
 56 including the collection of deferred fees through the tax sale
 57 process and recordation of the agreement or notice of the
 58 agreement in the County land records.

59 (3) The Director must record the agreement or notice of the
 60 agreement in the County land records. The notice must include a
 61 conspicuous statement that indicates it is being recorded by or on
 62 behalf of the County.

63 (d) Events accelerating payment. All deferred fees and accumulated
 64 interest and penalty, if any, become immediately payable when:

65 (1) the ownership of the property subject to a lien for repayment of
 66 the deferred fees is transferred; or

67 (2) the property becomes subject to tax sale.

68 (e) Payment, Early Payment; Termination of Lien.

69 (1) An Owner must pay a deferred fee on or before the end of the
 70 deferral period.

71 (2) After the owner pays the deferred fees and any accrued interest
 72 and penalty, the Director must record a notice of termination of
 73 the fee deferral lien in the County land records. The notice must
 74 include a conspicuous statement that indicates it is being recorded
 75 by or on behalf of the County.

76 (f) Delinquent Fees.

77 (1) Interest and Penalty. Any fee paid after the deferral period
 78 expires accrue interest and penalty on the amount of the deferred
 79 fees until paid at the rate which applies to delinquent real
 80 property taxes.

81 (g) Lien on Real Property and Collection. All fees deferred and any

82 accrued interest and penalty constitute a first lien on the real property to
 83 which the fees apply until paid. The deferred fees may be collected by
 84 suit or tax sale as with all other real property taxes. If any person liable
 85 does not pay all deferred fees as provided, the property may be certified
 86 to the Department of Finance and the lien may be sold at the next tax
 87 sale the County conducts. All deferred fees constitute a personal
 88 liability of the owner of the property.

89 (h) Penalties for False or Fraudulent Information. A person who knowingly
 90 submits a false or fraudulent application or statement or withholds
 91 information in order to obtain a deferral under this Section:

92 (1) has committed a Class A violation.

93 (2) is liable for and must repay to the County any deferred fees plus
 94 interest and penalty at the rate which applies to delinquent real
 95 property taxes from the date of the deferral to the date of
 96 payment; and

97 (3.) is liable for all court costs and expenses of the County, including
 98 attorney's fees, in a civil action brought by the County.

99 (i) Regulations. The County Executive may adopt regulations under
 100 method (2) to administer this fee deferral program.]]

101 **[[Sec. 2. Sunset.** County Code Section 2-42C, inserted by Section 1 of this
 102 Act, expires on April 1, 2010.]]

103 **Sec. 2. Sections 8-24 and 8-25, as amended by Section 1 of this Act, are**
 104 **further amended as follows:**

105 **8-24. Application for permit.**

106 * * *

107 (i) **Time limit.** An application for a permit for any proposed work must be
 108 treated as abandoned ~~[[12]]~~ 6 months after the application was filed,

109 unless the application has been diligently prosecuted or a permit was
110 issued. However, for reasonable cause, the Director may extend the
111 time for the Department to consider an application for one or more
112 additional periods which do not exceed 90 days each.

113 **8-25. Permits.**

114 * * *

115 (b) *Time limit.*

116 (1) A building permit is invalid if:

117 (A) an approved inspection, as required by this Chapter, is not
118 recorded in the Department's inspection history file within
119 ~~[[18]]~~ 12 months after the permit is issued and a second
120 approved inspection is not recorded in the Department's
121 inspection history file within ~~[[20]]~~ 14 months after the
122 permit is issued; or

123 * * *

124 **Sec. 3. Expedited Effective Date.** The Council declares that this
125 legislation is necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This
126 Act takes effect 60 days after it becomes law. Section 2 of this Act takes effect on
127 July 1, 2010.

128 *Approved:*

129

Philip M. Andrews, President, County Council

Date

130 *Approved:*

131

Isiah Leggett, County Executive

Date

LEGISLATIVE REQUEST REPORT

Expedited Bill 5-09

Permit Fees – New Construction - Deferral

- DESCRIPTION:** Adds new Sections to the law to allow the deferral of the payment of permit fees and other fees for new construction for 12 months.
- PROBLEM:** The current economic climate impacts the ability of builders to pay the fees prior to construction.
- GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** By deferring payment of fees the legislation will encourage new construction.
- COORDINATION:** Department of Permitting Services.
- FISCAL IMPACT:** To be requested.
- ECONOMIC IMPACT:** To be requested.
- EVALUATION:** Subject to the general oversight of the County Council and County Executive.
- EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE:** Not applicable
- SOURCE OF INFORMATION:** Tom Street, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer (240-777-2559)
- APPLICATION WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES:** Yes.
- PENALTIES:** Class A violation.

BILL



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Isiah Leggett
County Executive

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

MEMORANDUM

February 4, 2009

TO: Phil Andrews, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Isiah Leggett, County Executive 

SUBJECT: Proposed Legislation – Deferral of Permit Fees

I am attaching for the Council's consideration a bill which would allow a business to defer payment of permit, inspection, license, and engineering fees for 12 months. I am also attaching a Legislative Request Report for the proposed bill.

This bill is one of four legislative proposals which I am submitting to the Council to implement the 11-point economic plan which I announced in December 2008. Each legislative proposal is designed to ease some of the difficulties experienced by local businesses as a result of the national economic downturn. The current economic climate impacts the ability of builders to pay permit, inspection, license, and engineering fees before construction. Allowing a builder to defer payment of these fees will help to encourage new construction which is aimed at retaining existing jobs and creating new job opportunities. This deferral is only temporary and enables the payment to be made at a point in the development process that is closer to when a builder can expect to receive income from a project. This will reduce carrying costs for a project.

My 11-point economic plan included a proposal to provide an economic impact analysis for all legislative and regulatory changes which would analyze the impact of each proposed change on local businesses. We are in the process of completing an economic impact analysis for this bill and will forward it to Council in the near future along with the normal fiscal impact statement. I look forward to working with the Council as it considers this bill and my other three legislative proposals which provide opportunities for some measure of relief to our business community and residents.

IL:dg

Attachments (2)

3-5-09



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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET 040537

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Joseph F. Beach
Director

MEMORANDUM



February 5, 2009

TO: Phil Andrews, County Council President
FROM: Joseph F. Beach, Director, Office of Management and Budget
SUBJECT: Expedited Bill XX - New Construction Permit Fee Deferral

2009 FEB 17 PM 4:24
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
COUNCIL

The purpose of this memorandum is to transmit a fiscal impact statement to the Council on the subject legislation.

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

The purpose of the legislation is to create new Sections in Chapters 8, 17, 19, 27A, and 49 of the Montgomery County Code to authorize the deferral for a period of 12 months of the payment of permit fees, inspection fees, license fees, and engineering fees and to set out the terms and conditions of the deferral and for the repayment of the deferred fees.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Estimating that 75% of revenues from the fees will be deferred (\$12,692,600) and assuming a 1.5% interest rate, the loss in interest income would be \$190,389 for the year. Deferral of the fees DPS collects for MCFRS (\$584,140) would also reduce interest income for the County by \$8,760.

DPS is currently upgrading the Hansen permit system application and database. To support the new legislation, the migration scripts that convert the Hansen 7 Database to the Hansen 8 Database will have to be modified by the vendor for every Permit Type. Converted data must be verified. DPS estimates that the vendor will require an additional \$20,000. The existing contract will require modification and approval by the Office of the County Attorney and Department of General Services. This additional cost will be absorbed within DPS' current appropriation.

Office of the Director

9

DPS will be required to invoice program participants for collection of the deferred fees. To perform this, the fiscal impact to DPS would be administrative costs for the supplies and postage for the billing. This would average \$2 per permit. Estimating a 75% participation rate, the administrative cost would be \$17,226. This projected increase in administrative costs will be absorbed within DPS' current appropriation.

The following contributed to and concurred with this analysis: Tom Laycock, Department of Permitting Services, Gail Lucas, Department of Permitting Services.

JFB:brg

- c: Tom Street, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
- Kathleen Boucher, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
- Dee Gonzalez, Office of the County Executive
- Carla A. Reid, Director, Department of Permitting Services
- Amy Wilson, Office of Management and Budget
- Brady Goldsmith, Office of Management and Budget



ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Public Hearing - March 3, 2009

Bill 3-09, Local Small Business Reserve Program - Amendments

Bill 4-09, Development Impact Tax -- Deferral

Bill 5-09, Permit Fees -- New Construction -- Deferral

Testimony of Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Kathleen Boucher

Good afternoon. I am Kathleen Boucher, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer with the Office of the County Executive. I want to thank Council President Andrews for sponsoring Bills 3-09, 4-09, and 5-09 on behalf of the County Executive, and the full Council for its timely consideration of these items.

Bill 3-09 proposes changes to the County's Local Small Business Reserve Program. Bills 4-09 and 5-09 amend the law governing impact taxes and fees related to new construction which are collected by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).

Over the past two years, the County has experienced the severe impacts of the recession that has gripped our entire nation. Except for a slight increase in February and September of 2008, the leading economic indicator for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region (which is used to predict future economic activity) has declined steadily since April 2007 (down 4% during the period). That decrease suggests that the region's economy will experience slower growth during the first half of 2009 and not re-accelerate until early summer at the earliest, depending on the breadth and depth of the national recession. The coincident economic indicator for the region (which measures the current performance of the economy and reflects consumer confidence) has also declined steadily since the spring of 2007 (down 12% during the period). Other signs of extreme stress in the County's economy include: no growth in resident employment during the past two years; a decline in home sales of more than 20% in each of the last 3 years (20.5% in 2006, 23.4% in 2007, and 20.6% in 2008); and an average 7.9% decline in home sale prices in 2008 (based on preliminary data).

These data and others point to a need for local government action to help our residents and businesses during this difficult economic time. On December 18, 2008, the Executive announced an 11-Point Economic Assistance Plan, which included the three bills that are the subject of today's hearing. A summary of the Plan is attached to this testimony. The Executive views his 11-point plan as a modest first step to help ease some of the difficulties experienced by local businesses as a result of the national economic downturn. The Executive will continue to work to find additional ways to assist County businesses and looks forward to working with the business community, the Council, and others to identify additional measures that can effectively and efficiently assist local businesses.

Generally, the Plan is an attempt to increase business opportunities for County-based businesses by:

- Allowing deferral of fees and taxes related to new construction;
- Extending expiration periods for building permit applications and inactive building permits related to new construction;
- Broadening the definition of “small local business” for the purpose of the County’s Small Local Business Reserve Program; and
- Increasing the percentage of County contracting opportunities that are directed to small local businesses.

The current economic climate impacts the ability of builders to pay impact taxes and fees for permits, inspections, licenses, and engineering before construction. By allowing a builder to defer payment of these taxes and fees, Bill 4-09 and Bill 5-09 will encourage new construction that will help to retain existing jobs and create new job opportunities. This deferral is only temporary and enables a builder to pay the taxes or fees at a point in the development process that is closer to when a builder can expect to receive income from a project. In essence, deferral of impact taxes and fees will reduce carrying costs for a project.

The current economic climate impacts local small businesses disproportionately to other businesses. By increasing the percentage of contracts that the County awards to local small businesses, Bill 3-09 will encourage greater participation in the program and help retain existing jobs and create opportunities for new jobs.

The following is a summary of the key components of Bill 3-09, Bill 4-09, and Bill 5-09.

Bill 3-09: This bill increases from 10% to 20% the combined dollar value of certain contracts that County departments must award to local small businesses.

Bill 4-09: This bill authorizes the deferral of impact tax payments (for both schools and transportation) for up to twelve months after their current due date. Currently, these taxes are due when the building permit for the associated property is issued by DPS. Bill 4-09 outlines conditions of deferral and circumstances that would lead to accelerated payment. These provisions are necessary in order to ensure that the County eventually receives payment of the deferred taxes and that deferred taxes are paid prior to the transfer of ownership of the associated property.

Bill 5-09: This bill authorizes the deferral of permit, inspection, license, and engineering fees associated with new construction for a period of 12 months from the time they are normally due. The bill also extends the time limit for abandonment of a building permit application from 6 to 12 months, and extends the time for recording an initial building inspection from 12 to 18 months after issuance of a building permit. As with Bill 4-09, and for the same reasons, this bill outlines conditions of deferral and circumstances that would lead to accelerated payment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of these bills. We look forward to working with the Council as it considers this package.

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett's Eleven Point Economic Assistance Plan
December 18, 2008

1. Increase Local, Small Business Reserve Program (LSBRP) gross annual sales thresholds for local small businesses in the wholesale, retail and services sectors to \$5 million from the current levels of \$2 million for wholesale businesses or \$2.5 million for retail goods and non-construction services, and to \$14 million from \$7 million for construction services and manufacturing. Also proposed is to increase the employee complement limits from 15 to 30 for wholesale and retail businesses, from 20 to 40 for manufacturing businesses, and from 25 to 50 for businesses in the service and construction sectors.
2. Increase the required percentage of Local, Small Business Reserve Program (LSBRP) participation in annual contracting from the present level of 10% to 20%.
3. Generally, delay up to 18 months, the effective dates of new legislation and regulations that have a substantial economic impact on business.
4. Allow, upon request, deferral of payment of permitting fees and impact taxes for a period of twelve months from their current due date.
5. Increase permit application expiration period to twelve months for those permits associated with new residential and commercial construction.
6. Increase expiration period for inactive building permits to eighteen months.
7. Extend the validity period for existing Adequate Public Facility reviews from five (5) years to seven (7) years.
8. Provide an economic and fiscal impact analysis as part of any legislation or regulatory change. The analysis to include an assessment of the impact on both the County and the parties being regulated.
9. Unbundle large County contracts. County requirements that have traditionally been bundled together for administrative and cost savings benefit should be scrutinized as candidates for unbundling.
10. Assist local Chambers of Commerce in providing Business Networking Forums for small businesses to connect with potential partners.
11. Partner with local Chambers of Commerce to hold business fairs at several county locations.



The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce

7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1204, Bethesda MD, 20814 • Ph (301) 652-4900 • Fax (301) 657-1973 • Email staff@bccchamber.org • Web www.bccchamber.org

Your Business Is
Our Only Business

**Testimonies of
Patrick L. O’Neil and
Frank Amantia
On Behalf of
The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase
Chamber of Commerce
Before the
Montgomery County Council
Regarding Bill Nos. 3-09, 4-09 and 5-09
March 3, 2009**

**THE GREATER BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE CHAMBER OF COMMECE
TESTIMONY REGARDING BILL NOS. 3-09, 4-09 AND 5-09
BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
MARCH 3, 2009**

Good afternoon. My name is Patrick O'Neil and I am the Vice President of Economic Development and Government Relations for the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of the Chamber, I am here to thank the County Executive for his efforts in Bill Nos. 3-09, 4-09 and 5-09 to address the economic impact of the current national recession on small businesses and development entities in the County. We are generally supportive of the proposals in the legislation and, through our testimony today, offer suggestions in some cases to make a good thing even better.

We begin with Bill 3-09 and the corresponding Executive Regulations (2-09) that propose meaningful changes to the Local Small Business Reserve Program. The legislation proposes, and we support, threshold increases to allow more local businesses to participate in the program; the doubling of the required participation percentage for each department and the deletion of the current sunset date for the program. Notably the proposed legislation transfers the responsibility for administering the program to the Department of General Services. We agree with this change and believe that DGS is the right County entity to oversee and promote the program.

Bill Nos. 4-09 and 5-09 propose to defer the payment of impact taxes and building permit fees and costs for up to twelve months. For our purposes, these bills are interrelated and we address them together. Like the changes to the Local Small Business Reserve Program, the bills' proposed deferral opportunities are well-intentioned. Presumably the legislation is designed to create construction industry jobs, which have all but disappeared in the current economic crisis. As such, the legislation encourages the development of approved projects that have been stalled by the absence of available financing. However, the additional bureaucratic hurdles imbedded in these bills could serve to defeat their purposes.

In particular, the requirements for executed deferral agreements and for the filing of security interests on affected properties would discourage a developer from taking advantage of the deferral opportunities. I have asked Frank Amantia of the Mid-Atlantic Federal Credit Union to

address these lien impacts from a construction lending perspective. Mr. Amantia has over 20 years of lending experience in the County.

Mr. Amantia opines that Bills 4-09 and 5-09 provide effective stimulus for developers to re-enter the marketplace, but they ignore the regulatory and procedural requirements of lenders who provide needed funding to bring the developers' plans to fruition. The primary area of concern is the Bills' requirement that deferred taxes and fees be perfected in the form of a lien, filed in the land records. This lien, which is given priority status, prevents the lender from achieving first position. The second point of concern is the Bills' requirement that any deferral be memorialized in a "written agreement" filed in the land records. The terms of this agreement diminish the effectiveness of the lender's loan documents. If the Bills were revised to preserve the rights and remedies of the lenders, without whose funds the developers' plans would generally not be possible, the Bills would spur both developers and lenders alike.

In light of the unintended effects of the lien requirements and the written agreements, and in an effort to provide a more meaningful incentive for would-be developers, we propose a simpler deferral option. This option has been cooperatively developed by our Chamber, the Montgomery County Chamber, the Greater Silver Spring Chamber and others. A copy of our collective efforts is attached. We propose the deferral of all impact taxes and permit fees and costs until the project is ready for occupancy. The Department of Permitting Services would not issue final occupancy approvals until the outstanding fees and costs are paid.

Our proposal is easier to understand and more enticing to a prospective developer than the current legislation. Our proposed deferral is easy to obtain because it is automatic – no deferral agreement or approval is required. More importantly, our proposal provides a clear benchmark for when payments are due and provides meaningful County leverage to ensure that the fees and costs are ultimately paid. If the goal is job creation through development opportunities, Bills 4-09 and 5-09 are more likely to achieve the goal with our proposed changes.

On behalf of the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, thank you for the opportunity to present these comments.

(March 3, 2009)

IMPACT TAXES

52-51A. Deferral of payments

(a) *Definitions.* In this Section the following words have the meanings indicated:

(1) *Final permit* means a certificate of use and occupancy or, if a certificate of use and occupancy is not required for the development, a final inspection report.

(2) *Impact tax or tax* means the Taxes imposed under this Article and Article XII.

(3) *Owner* means a person who has a legal record title interest in real property, including a creditor with a recorded lien on the property, on which development is proposed that is subject to the impact tax.

(b) *Authorization to defer.* An owner may defer payment on all impact tax due until the issuance of a final permit needed to occupy any portion of the development. A payment that has been deferred pursuant to this section must be paid before the final permit will be issued.

(c) *Sunset.* The opportunity to obtain a deferral of payment under this Section expires on April 1, 2013.

PERMITS

No changes are proposed for the proposed amendments for Section 8-24 (Application for permit) and 8-25 (Permits).

2-42C. Permit fees - new construction - deferrals.

(a) *Definitions.* In this Section the following words have the meanings indicated:

(1) *Fee or fees* mean any permit fee, license fee, inspection fee, or engineering fee required to be paid before a permit or license is issued or an inspection is made under Chapter 8, 17, 19, 27A, or 49.

(2) *Final permit* means a certificate of use and occupancy or, if a certificate of use and occupancy is not required for the new construction, a final inspection report.

(3) *New Construction* means:
(A) any new building; and
(B) any addition or renovation of an existing building that replaces 50% or more of the existing first floor exterior walls, measured around the perimeter of the building.

(4) *Owner* means a person who has legal record title to the real property on which the new construction is proposed that is subject to the fee.

(b) *Authorization to defer.* An owner or other applicant may defer payment on a fee associated with new construction until the issuance of a final permit needed to occupy any portion of the new construction.

(c) *Sunset.* The opportunity to obtain a new construction deferral under this Section expires on April 1, 2013.

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**Maryland National Capital Building Industry Association (MNCBIA)
Testimony Before the Montgomery County Council
On
Expedited Bill 4-09: Development Impact Tax – Deferral
Expedited Bill 5-09: Permit Fees – New Construction - Deferral**

March 3, 2009

Good afternoon. My name is Tom Farasy.

I am the 2009 President of Maryland-National Capital Building Industry Association. The BIA represents builders and developers in Prince George's, Montgomery, St. Mary's, Charles and Calvert counties. We have 600 + members today.

The MNCBIA supports the County Executive's Emergency Bill Nos. 4-09 and 5-09, with amendments.

Bills 4-09 and 5-09 as drafted creates a bureaucracy that is costly to the County, cumbersome to the applicant, and burdensome to both; it provides under the **most optimum** of circumstances, eight months breathing room to an industry underwater and struggling to stay afloat.

Given the national regional and local forecasting, eight months is clearly not enough.

I do not need to brief the Council on the severity of the recession that we are all experiencing. It is in the news everyday and none of us have ever experienced this type of recession. The County's drop in revenues mirrors the precipitous drop in the housing market. Unfortunately, the forecast by industry experts does not offer any relief until well beyond 2009.

As you may remember, sales and building starts in 2008 were dramatically reduced as compared to 2007. Hanley Wood, the research company that tracks new home sales in residential projects over 10 units, reports for Montgomery County:

- * Net sales were 894 in 2008 vs. 1159 in 2007 vs. 2621 in 2006;
- * The average new home sales in 2008 vs. 2006 were as follows:

Type	2008	2007	2006
Single Family	\$792,120	\$888,850	\$905,795
Townhouse	\$437,806	\$513,764	\$507,692
Condominium	\$339,113	\$506,130	\$473,736

- * The vacant lot inventory has grown to a 12.2 month supply as of December 31, 2008 vs. an average of 2.2 months supply in calendar 2006; the normal lot inventory is 2 months, so we are six (6) times the norm.

BUILDING HOMES, CREATING NEIGHBORHOODS

Two recent reports by Zelman & Associates affirm that this recession will not recede anytime soon; to highlight a few details:

Hope Now: Delinquency and Foreclosure Report, January 2009

- This month's foreclosure rate marks the highest level since July 2007
- In December 2008, 203,000 homes entered the foreclosure process, up from 169,000 in November 2008

Foreclosures Presenting Unprecedented Conditions, January 26, 2009

- 2009 new sales to decrease 40%
- Due to unprecedented competition from foreclosures, Zelman projects ***new home sales to be less than 7% of real estate home sales*** vs. an historical median of 16%
- Zelman is lowering new housing starts from 750,000 to 575,000 for 2009
- ***No increase in housing starts until 2011***

(The Hanley Wood and the Zelman Reports are attached to my testimony for your convenience)

Many of our suppliers, builders and developers have had 4, 5 or more rounds of layoffs. Last week alone, a concrete supplier reported he went from 100 employees a year ago to 30 today; one of our builders reported to me, his payroll has gone from 72 employees a year ago to 17 today. Such stories go on and on.

While we anticipate a recovery, and anticipate that the President's Stimulus Bill will have an effect, what we know is that this recovery will not be traditional, and there is no ***guaranteed*** trigger date. This is the reality that frames the industry's comments today.

Bills 4-09 and 5-09 are well intentioned; however:

1. The legislation requires a lien on the property. A lien will require lender consent. Unfortunately, many lenders are not available for such conversations; when available, they are not making decisions. This process requires asking lenders to agree to an action that increases their risk; we believe that lenders would not respond to this request, nor agree to the placing of a lien, thereby negating the deferral provided by the legislation.
2. The legislation sunsets on April 01, 2010 providing less than 1 year window for applicants who have dared, or who dare, to initiate any development or construction.
3. The legislation requires an agreement between the applicant and the Department of Permitting Services. This is an expensive, onerous and lengthy proposition; in addition there is no certainty ... by the time the agreement is drafted, negotiated amongst the parties, agreed to by the parties, consent obtained from the lender any period of benefit if one ever gets to the finish line might be 3 months of relief at best. We are in a recession cycle that is going to last for years, not 3 months.

Maryland National Capital Building Industry Association (MNCBIA)
Testimony Before the Montgomery County Council
On
Expedited Bill 4-09: Development Impact Tax – Deferral
Expedited Bill 5-09: Permit Fees – New Construction – Deferral
March 3, 2009
Page 3 of 3

Our amendments are simple:

- Utilizing DPS's current system of inspections, require that all deferred fees and taxes be paid before an Occupancy Permit can be issued; when an Occupancy Permit is not required, require that fees and taxes be paid prior to final inspection.
- Given the unpredictability in the current economy to guarantee any significant recovery in the next 36 months, provide a sunset date of April 01, 2013.

The industry needs relief, quickly, simply, Not a lien, not an agreement, not for less than one year. Our proposal assures that the County will be paid its impact taxes, as well as its permit, inspection, license, and engineering fees.

Our members look forward to participating in the Council's worksessions on these Bills. Thank you for the opportunity to present the industry's perspective today.



March 3, 2009

The Honorable Phil Andrews, President
and Members of the Montgomery County Council
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Public Hearing - Expedited Bills 4-09 and 5-09 (the "Legislation")

Dear President Andrews and Members of the Council:

The Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce is pleased to submit this letter as its testimony in the Council's public hearing on the above referenced Legislation scheduled for today, March 3, 2009.

On behalf of the Board of the Chamber, I wish to express our support for the efforts of the County Executive and the County Council to provide regulatory relief and economic assistance to County businesses in this extraordinarily difficult economic climate. This assistance is especially needed by the residential and commercial development industry that would specifically benefit from this Legislation.

Members of the Chamber's Economic Development Committee and representatives of our development and land use sectors have reviewed these bills and agree that this Legislation is a good first step. However, they also point out that it does not go far enough, given the depth of the hardship to the development community that has been caused by the current economic downturn, the uncertainty for recovery, and the importance to the County for vibrant and sustained development activity.

In this regard, the Chamber respectfully requests that the Council consider the following revisions to the Legislation to make it more effective in providing meaningful/usable assistance to the development community during this period of significant economic uncertainties and difficulties:

- Amend Bill 4-09 (Impact Tax Deferral) and Bill 5-09 (Permit Fees, Deferrals and Permit Validity Period Extensions) to extend the deferral of the Impact Tax Payments and permit fees until the issuance of the final permit/inspection or certificate of occupancy needed for occupancy, rather than only 12 months, with a corresponding extension to the sunset date. *The additional time for deferral is requested in recognition of the extended nature of the downturn and the uncertain timing of a recovery. By allowing deferral to a point in the development process that is tied to sale and transfer, builders can conserve capital and delay out-of-pocket costs. This also defers the payment to a point in time when the applicant is likely to have money coming in with which to make the payment. Further, the cost of the payment will not become an additional part of the financing costs during construction.*

- Eliminate the requirement in both Bill 4-09 and 5-09 that applicants for a deferral of Impact Taxes and/or permit fees enter into an agreement with the County and place a lien for such deferred payments on the subject property. *This requirement is cumbersome for agency staff to monitor and may interfere with project financing. Moreover, the County can ensure payment of deferred fees by withholding use and occupancy permits and/or final inspections. These are already points in the process where the County acts as the gatekeeper.*
- Amend 5-09 to allow for 24 months for a first inspection and 26 months for a second inspection, but also allow extensions for these inspections. *Given the uncertainty of the time frame for recovery and the lack of stable market conditions necessary for development to commence, it is essential to provide realistic time frames for development that are long enough to avoid multiple extension requests.*

We believe these requested revisions are reasonable and will enhance the usefulness of the economic assistance package to the benefit of the development community and, ultimately, all of the residents of Montgomery County. If you have any questions on our testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jane Redicker

cc: Diane Schwartz-Jones, Esq.



March 2, 2009

Montgomery County Civic Federation Talking Points for March 3 Hearing on Economic Stimulus Legislation--Expedited Bills 4-09 and 5-09

Rather than adopt a position in support of or opposition to these two pieces of legislation, at their meeting on February 18, 2009, the MCCF Executive Committee voted unanimously to submit these talking points to the County Council for consideration.

Defer Deadline for Payment of Impact Taxes by One Year from Current Due Date - Expedited Bill 4-09

- POSITIVE: a one-year deferral of impact tax payments might allow some development projects to go forward which might otherwise be abandoned
- NEGATIVE: although impact tax payments deferred over the next year would be made in FY11, the deferral will further reduce FY10 revenue projections at a time when the county is facing a \$500M budget shortfall and an anticipated further decrease in projected tax collections (sales, income tax, etc.)

Deferral of Building Permit Fees, Extend Inspection Deadlines, Extend Abandonment of Permit Deadline - Expedited Bill 5-09

- POSITIVE: a one-year deferral of building permit and associated permit fees might allow some building projects to go forward which might otherwise be abandoned
- NEGATIVE: although building permit and associated permit fees deferred over the next year would be made in FY11, the deferral will further decrease FY10 revenue projections at a time when the county is facing a \$500m budget shortfall and an anticipated further decrease in projected tax collections (sales, income tax. etc.)

- POSITIVE: deferred payment of permit fees and a 6-month inspection extension may allow builders, who might otherwise go bankrupt and cancel residential infill projects or abandon them in mid-construction due to cash flow constraints, to finish them and go to sale--and thereby avoid having half-finished home construction projects or empty demolition sites negatively impact safety and attractiveness of neighborhoods
- NEGATIVE: a 6-month inspection extension could mean residents are living with construction projects in their neighborhoods for up to 6 months longer than present (noise, construction trucks parking up residential streets, port-a-johns sitting next to public sidewalks, muddy sites strewn with construction debris awaiting landscaping)

- NEGATIVE: a 6-month inspection extension could result in projects being put on hold (no construction activity) or on slow-down (using fewer workers to complete job over longer period), which seems counterintuitive to any effort to create/maintain jobs
- NOTE: we recommend a new law to require the surrounding of residential infill (teardown/rebuild) demolition sites with 8' high chain-link fence if new construction does not begin immediately would prevent safety hazard of having unintended ponds (foundations of demolished homes filled with stormwater) in established neighborhoods; also need requirement that such water be treated to prevent mosquito breeding

General note regarding this legislation

- no economic or fiscal impact analysis was included with the bills when introduced, even though one of the proposals in the County Executive's 11-Point Economic Stimulus Package (released 12/18/08) reads--

"8. Provide an economic and fiscal impact analysis as part of any legislation or regulatory change. The analysis to include an assessment of the impact on both the County and the parties being regulated."

Fiscal impact analyses were finally released to the public in the packets for Bills 4-09 and 5-09, which were posted on the Council website February 27. This information was made available far too late for any organization, such as the Federation, to disseminate, analyze, and adopt a position prior to the March 3 public hearing.

These fiscal analyses project a loss to the county from these two pieces of legislation of a total of \$637,000--a loss of \$600,000 in interest on fee and tax revenue due to deferred collection, and an added \$37,000 administrative cost. Although the figure seems small in relation to the size of the total County budget, it is a substantial and unnecessary cost to incur in the midst of perhaps the worst economic downturn since the great Depression.

In addition, no economic impact analysis has yet been submitted for Bills 4-09 or 5-09 (in the County Executive's own words, the "impact on the parties being regulated"). In the absence of such analysis, the public is being asked to testify at this hearing without being privy to the County Executive's opinion as to the full extent of impact, either positive or negative, which these legislative proposals may have. This legislative process is inadequate and unacceptable, especially since it involves bills introduced on behalf of a County Executive who purports to value transparency, accountability and informed citizen participation in government decision making.

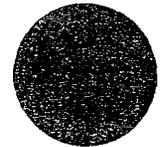
submitted on behalf of the Civic Federation Executive Committee by
Jim Humphrey
Chair, MCCF Planning and Land Use Committee
(301)652-6259 day/evening/weekends
email - theelms518@earthlink.net

NAN
CC
MF

Marin, Sandra

From: Andrews' Office, Councilmember
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 9:14 AM
To: Montgomery County Council
Subject: FW: Hillandale Citizens Association Testimony on Bill 5-09

040782



-----Original Message-----

From: Eileen Finnegan [mailto:finnegan20903@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2009 9:21 PM
To: Andrews' Office, Councilmember; Harriston, Delphine
Cc: Floreen's Office, Councilmember; Elrich's Office, Councilmember; Knapp's Office, Councilmember; Ervin's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Hillandale Citizens Association Testimony on Bill 5-09

Hello council President Andrews and Ms. Harriston,

Since the speakers list was full for the hearing on this bill, I am submitting the testimony of the Hillandale Citizens Association with this e-mail.

Thank you.

Eileen Finnegan
10404 Sweetbriar Parkway
Silver Spring, MD 20903
301-439-2263

2009 MAR -2 AM 9:25
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Hilandale Citizens Association

Testimony to County Council on Emergency Bill 5-09,
March 3, 2009

“Please add a requirement for chain-link fencing on new residential in-fill construction. Open foundations and open construction sites are unsafe. Our experiences with two sites near our elementary school make this a basic safety/security concern.”

Neighborhood Safety Issue: Chain-link fencing is needed for residential infill building sites

- Large, open foundation pits are unsafe.
- Construction sites are inviting & dangerous.
- Commercial permits require fencing.



1226 Cresthaven Drive , next to elementary school

Demolition Permits: Is a Year Too Much?

10318 Parkman: Purchased for demolition in July, 2006; Demolition permit #424891 issued on August 13, 2007; Now long EXPIRED.

Building is still standing.

Not-habitable structure in limbo as builder continues to seek buyers for two lot property.

Not the only time...

1258 Cresthaven demolition happened 13 months after issuance, left debris, unsafe conditions and an unsecured hole for many, many months.

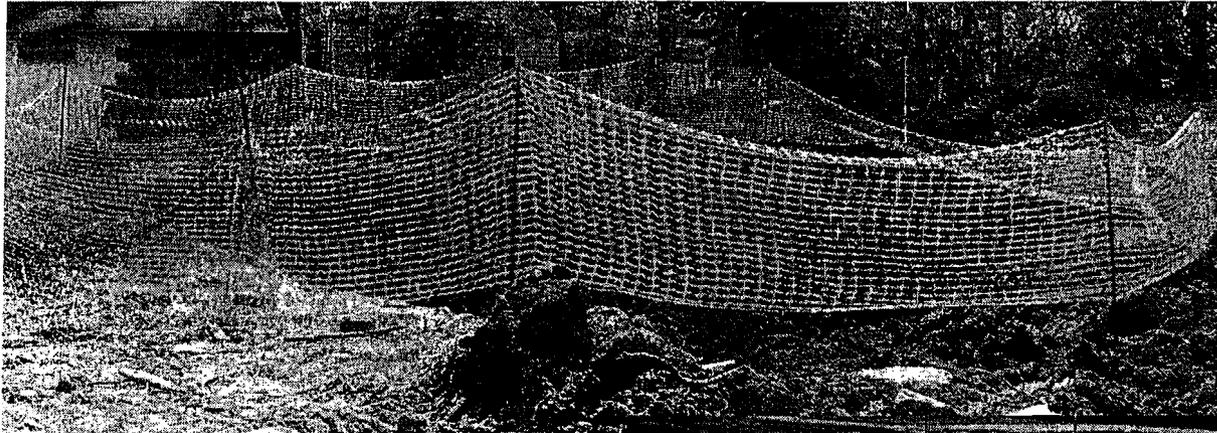


Chain-link fencing needed for new home/in-fill construction projects

**Example: 1258 Cresthaven Drive at the corner of
Cresthaven, Harper and Royal Roads. One short block to
Cresthaven Elementary School**

**First foundation hole was an open pit. With contractor
difficulties, this was an seemingly “abandoned” site for
many months. After complaints, DPS requested
snow/orange plastic fencing as a safeguard as “a favor to
the community.” Community informed that chain-link
fencing is only required on commercial projects.**





1258 Cresthaven Drive "Do Over"

**Above: Second Foundation hole with
DPS requested plastic fencing**

**Right: Foundation hole with sewer pipe
installation. Note condition of plastic
fencing along Cresthaven Drive.**

