



Government Affairs Newsletter

February 25, 2025

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LOWER EASTERN SHORE ACTIVITY

Hi All,

The big news for the past week has been the change to the R-1 and MH ordinance. We are now looking at a 31 consecutive day length of stay requirement, which is a ban on short term rentals in those neighborhoods. There'll be a tow year sunset with a five nigh minimum length of stay requirement for 2025 and 2026. The 31 day requirement will begin on the first day of 2027.

Please use this link to contact the Mayor and Council to let your opinion on this matter: <https://oceancitymd.gov/oc/city-hall/mayor-and-city-council/>

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R-1 UPDATE

Current Status:

We are looking at a 31 consecutive day minimum length of stay in R-1 and MH communities starting on January 1, 2027. The 2025 and 2026 rental license years will require a five consecutive night minimum length of stay.

The earliest this will be heard is on March 3rd at Ocean City Town Hall at 6PM. This new version of this ordinance is more restrictive than what planning and zoning suggested. Planning and Zoning had left Mobile Home communities out of their version of the ordinance and their sunset did not have a minimum length of stay requirement.

This is in conjunction with the moratorium, the new changes to enforcement, and changes to occupancy.

As of 2.25, the ordinance's language is not available and the agenda which this ordinance will be on has not been posted. Please check back for updates.



Worcester County

WINDMILL UPDATE

Ocean City is joining Worcester County's "anti-wind" PR campaign by agreeing to contribute \$100,000 to these efforts.

This comes a couple of weeks after the county has agreed to purchase the West Ocean City properties which will serve as a staging ground for offshore wind construction. That is the first step toward using eminent domain to acquire those properties, preventing U.S. Wind from using them, and stalling this project.

[Click here to view Worcester County's latest update on their efforts in West Ocean City.](#)

Last Tuesday, the Commissioners tabled legislation that works toward acquiring the West Ocean City properties. They are looking to tighten some of the language of the bill (they are creating new definitions), so that the acquisition process can begin.

MDE is accepting public comment on the Ocean City wind project until March 17th and comments can be sent to shannon.heafey@maryland.gov.



Wicomico County

DOG KENNEL BILL

Wicomico County Council revised their ordinance on dog kennels. Originally, they had required kennels to be at least 1,000 feet from a residence, with that distance starting at the kennel's property line.

The Council has since reduced that distance to 500 feet starting at the kennel building.

Existing kennels will be grandfathered in.

During this bill's lifecycle, members of the public played recordings they had taken of nearby kennels and the noise was quite loud. This may be something to mention to consumers.



Somerset County

SOMERSET COUNTY UPDATE

I'm seeing no new news for Somerset County.

Legislative Session Update

MARYLAND REALTORS EFFORTS

The 2025 Maryland General Assembly is underway!

[Click here to view Maryland REALTORS Advocacy page.](#)

As bills are issued, MR compiles legislation that is relevant to our business. Bills are evaluated by their legislative committee and leadership and given a grade: Support, Oppose, Monitor, or No Position. Support and Oppose are given a level of urgency, one through five, which equates to the amount of advocacy necessary for each.

The link above allows you to follow along as each bill comes with a synopsis, a link to the bill page (which has its bill text and calendar dates for hearings), and MR's position.

Please reach out if you have any questions about the legislation MR is tracking. I follow these closely and will do my best to explain what each bill does.

Several of the septic bills have been rescinded, which is good news for the Lower Shore. I will continue to watch in case they pop up again.

There are also several bills related to the Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS), which affect many of our condos. These are worth watching as any rollback on these would help condo owners have more flexibility. Reporting for BEPS is supposed to begin this July.