

**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARC ELRICH ON EXPEDITED
BILL 10-21 THE COUNTY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

March 23, 2021

Good afternoon Council President Hucker and Councilmembers. I am ACAO Jerome Fletcher and I am testifying on behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich.

The Executive supports the bill's purpose to transfer the drafting of the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan from the Executive to the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) given its maturity and expertise. He also supports the bill's requirement that the Strategic Plan include clear target metrics, strategies and measures for increasing business activity in the County. However, as the bill now stands, it does not incorporate fundamentally important County goals related to climate change and racial equity. Since economic development, climate change and racial equity are so closely intertwined, they must be integrated in our strategic planning efforts (as opposed to being addressed separately) to ensure complementary solutions. If they are not, we risk advancing one strategic priority at the expense of another.

It matters, for example, *what* types of jobs are being created and who has access to those jobs to ensure that we're growing our economy equitably; it matters *how* we build our economic base so that we can accelerate GHG reductions and build greater self-sufficiency and resiliency in the face of increasing climate hazards.

Given the crises of our time, which can arguably be attributed to a narrow economic development philosophy promoting growth above all else, we must think about changing the paradigm so that our economic development efforts are anchored and tied to our efforts to create a sustainable and equitable community.

For economic reasons alone Montgomery County should make clear that we are serious about proactively addressing climate change. Rating agencies are now considering the extent to which jurisdictions address climate risk. Businesses are seeking to minimize their risk by locating or expanding in jurisdictions focused on ensuring continuous commercial operations in the face of climate hazards, including supply chain disruptions and power outages.

The Executive firmly believes that the County's CAP has the potential to significantly advance our economic development efforts and the Economic Development Strategic Plan has the potential to significantly advance our climate and racial equity goals.

Therefore, we request the following:

- Bill 10-21 be amended so that the "relevant economic development measures" are expanded to include advancing the County's goals related to: 1) greenhouse gas reductions, 2) climate resiliency and adaptation, and 3) racial equity and social justice.
- MCEDC should be asked to incorporate these additional measures into the Economic Development Strategic Plan and work with the Climate Planning Team to fully integrate climate, resiliency and racial equity goals into the Strategic Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.