



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Richard S. Madaleno
Chief Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM

March 5, 2024

TO: Andrew Friedson, President, County Council

FROM: Earl P. Stoddard, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Earl Stoddard – Oral, In Person Testimony on behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich in Support of Bill 3-24: Late Night Establishments - Hours of Operation

Good afternoon Council President Friedson, Council Vice President Stewart, and members of the County Council.

For the record, Earl Stoddard, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, testifying on behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich in Support of Bill 3-24: Late Night Establishments - Hours of Operation.

The County Executive supports a vibrant nighttime economy in Montgomery County generally and in Silver Spring specifically. However, in Montgomery County there must be a balance between the public safety needs of the community and the economic interests of businesses. Right now, there is an imbalance in parts of our County.

As the data from the Montgomery County Police Department will show during the Joint Committee Session, the police calls for service during the hours of 2am-5am are disproportionately distributed across areas of the county where certain businesses are operating during these hours. To compensate, the Police department has had to move more personnel resources off of earlier shifts to cover those hours, particularly in downtown Silver Spring.

During the periods of Police staffing shortages that we face today, this denies the bar community of much needed police resources to the benefit of limited, select group of businesses, and their patrons.

By limiting the hours of operations to a time consistent with other nighttime businesses, this allows for a more equitable distribution of public safety resources and appropriately dedicates those resources to a common, earlier closing time for all businesses.

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In addition to the public safety challenges, we also know that Hukkah and other smoking establishments pose an ongoing risk to public health, particularly for the workers in those establishments. By limiting those hours of operations, we can reduce the burden of exposure to the harmful carcinogens that are contained therein.

For these reasons, the County Executive supports passage of Bill 3-24 and encourages the Council to do so in an expedited fashion to allow this law to take effect in advance of this summer. Thank you.