

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
**COMMISSIONERS OF  
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President  
Michael R. Alderson, Jr., Commissioner  
Eric Colvin, Commissioner  
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner  
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

**House Bill 81  
Constitutional Amendment – Form of County Government –  
Requirement to Adopt Charter Home Rule**

**OPPOSE**

January 30, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman, Chairman  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251, House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Korman:

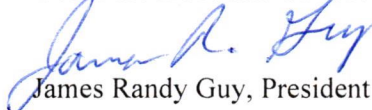
The Commissioners of St. Mary's County **OPPOSE House Bill 81 - Constitutional Amendment – Form of County Government – Requirement to Adopt Charter Home Rule** which will be heard in the Environment and Transportation Committee. This bill would usurp local authority and local preference by forcing all of Maryland's counties – regardless of size and circumstance – to follow one form of government.

A one-size-fits-all approach to the structure of county governments infringes on autonomy and flexibility in local governance. Local decision-makers and local voters are best positioned to know their home county's needs and the best means to address them. Allowing the entire state to choose the form of government for a particular county, regardless of how that county's citizens actually feel, is an unwarranted and troubling assault on local autonomy.

Important to note, St. Mary's Countians previously **voted to oppose a similar, though even less-sweeping, change.** In 2016, our citizens decisively voted in favor of keeping the traditional commissioner form of government when presented the choice to adopt code home rule.

It has been St. Mary's County's consistent position for years that matters of local governance should be left to local citizens. Changes should only come if approved by a local referendum. Accordingly, the Commissioners **OPPOSE** HB 81 - Constitutional Amendment – Form of County Government – Requirement and request an unfavorable report from the Committee.

Sincerely,  
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY

  
James Randy Guy, President

CSMC/AB/sf  
T:/Consent/2024/014

Page 2  
Delegate Marc Korman, Chairman  
January 30, 2024

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey  
Delegate Todd Morgan  
Delegate Matthew Morgan  
Delegate Brian Crosby  
Commissioner Mike Alderson, Jr.  
Commissioner Eric Colvin  
Commissioner Michael Hewitt  
Commissioner Scott R. Ostrow  
David Weiskopf, County Administrator  
John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney