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PUBLIC SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM  
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INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

DAVID G. LEVER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NANCY S. GRASMICK  
CHAIRPERSON

March 6, 2009

The Honorable Barry Glassman  
Miller Senate Office Building, Room 401  
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Harford County Public Schools: Campus Hills Elementary School

Dear Senator Glassman:

My apology for not fully explaining the background of the IAC approval of the Campus Hills Elementary site in my letter of March 4, 2009. In your response of March 4 you correctly stated that the Campus Hills site is not in a Priority Funding Area and is not served by public water and sewer. Although the IAC would always prefer to approve a site within a PFA, the Committee recognized, on the recommendation of the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning, that there were valid reasons why this particular site should be approved. First, Harford County Public Schools provided evidence that no other sites of reasonable size were available for the proposed elementary school. Second, the overcrowding of the elementary schools in the area indicated that construction of the new school was essential. Finally, the proposed school, even though outside of the PFA, will in fact allow residential growth to proceed within the growth area, thereby furthering the State's policies to concentrate growth. The IAC's response indicates that it will consider overarching policy objectives rather than narrow technical qualifications in making site approval decisions, and that flexibility is needed to serve the twin objectives of adequate educational facilities and good planning practice, particularly in rapidly urbanizing areas in which adequate school sites may be scarce.

With regard to the marginal perk results mentioned in your letter of March 4, this is a matter that must be addressed through the local permitting process. The obligation falls on Harford County Public Schools and the architectural/engineering consultants to find an appropriate engineering solution for the problem, and to address any concerns that may be raised in the way of obtaining the building permit. For locally funded projects that have not received State planning approval, the Facilities Branch of the Maryland State Department of Education rather than the Department of General Services reviews design document submissions. As with a number of other technical issues related to school design and construction, MSDE is not staffed to carry out the detailed design review that would be needed to pass judgment on this type of issue. We believe that the interests of the public, the Board of Education, and the local government are well protected through the local permitting process.

I hope that these remarks address your concerns. Please feel free to call me at any time to further discuss the IAC's decisions with regard to the Campus Hills Elementary site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Lever'.

David Lever, R.A., D.A.  
Executive Director  
Maryland Public School Construction Program

The Honorable Barry Glassman  
March 6, 2009  
Page 2

cc: The Honorable David Craig, Harford County Executive  
The Honorable Billy Boniface, President, Harford County Council  
Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, Chair, Interagency Committee on School Construction  
Mr. Alvin C. Collins, Member, Interagency Committee on School Construction  
Mr. Richard Hall, Member, Interagency Committee on School Construction  
Mr. Timothy Maloney, Member, Interagency Committee on School Construction  
Mr. Frederick Puddester, Member, Interagency Committee on School Construction  
Ms. Patricia L. Skebeck, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Joseph Licata, Chief of Administration, HCPS  
Mr. Cornell Brown, Asst. Superintendent for Operations, HCPS  
Mr. Robert Cooper, Harford County Director of Public Works