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Kittleman submits legislation aimed at simplifying flood recovery process in Historic Ellicott City

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman today filed legislation with the County Council aimed at simplifying the recovery process for building owners of historic properties damaged in the July 30 Ellicott City flash flood.

Kittleman's bill would allow certain minor alterations of historic buildings to proceed without a certificate of approval from the Howard County Historic Preservation Commission as long as the alterations are in accordance with accepted design guidelines.

"This legislation will speed up the process of getting these businesses up and running faster," Kittleman said. "We have an opportunity to eliminate some of the red tape while at the same time respecting the historic designation of these buildings."

Kittleman said the bill would allow the county's Department of Planning and Zoning to approve work such as replacement of non-historic materials with historically appropriate materials, signs, minor landscape changes, minor changes to plans already approved by the Historic Preservation Commission and simplification of the pre-approval process for historic property tax credits.

The current process can take up to two months to obtain written approval. The proposed process will reduce this to approximately two weeks. The Commission will continue to approve significant alterations to structures within historic districts through the normal process.

Allan Shad, chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, said his organization supports streamlining the process for minor alterations to historic structures in the Ellicott City and Lawyers Hill Historic districts.

"The new process will avoid lengthy timelines for property owners making minor changes that comply with the Historic District Guidelines and will aid the recovery and reconstruction of Historic Ellicott City," Shad said.

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