

CODE HOME RULE FACT SHEET

- Code Home Rule is the same form of government we have now (5 Commissioners) only with broader authority for self-governing. No new elected offices are created, no County “czar” is established, i.e. there is no County Executive. **There are no additional costs imposed by Code Home Rule that would necessitate any tax increases.**
- Present “Commissioner” form of government is the only form of county government that is *not* home rule, meaning we have to get permission from our representatives in the MD General Assembly to do everything from passing noise ordinances to issuing bonds for school construction. The General Assembly is in session only three months of the year, and the majority of Cecil County’s delegates (5 of 8) neither live in, nor primarily represent, Cecil County, and are elected largely by residents of other counties.
- Such scattered legislative authority has resulted in “pass the buck” governance; e.g. our Commissioners blame the state delegation and vice-versa, resulting in a lack of planning that has hurt the county and its residents.
- Unlike Charter form of home rule, Code Home Rule allows the county to adopt alternate sources of revenue such as impact fees on new homes or excise taxes (but not both) and transfer taxes on property sales, **instead of relying solely on current residents’ property taxes to pay for new infrastructure** (schools, roads, water & sewer) that comes with growth. 2/3 of MD counties already impose either impact fees or excise taxes.
- A handful of state delegates have repeatedly blocked impact fees on developers and excise taxes on businesses as alternate revenue sources for our county, forcing homeowners to pay for the cost of new infrastructure through property taxes. Code Home Rule counties have authority to establish impact fees, but only for infrastructure (schools, roads, bridges, water & sewer treatment & transport) related to growth.
- If approved by voters in November Code Home Rule would go into effect almost immediately — within 30 days.
- Adoption of Code Home Rule does not preclude the option of adopting Charter government in the future. A Charter board could be formed next year if Commissioners so desire, and the public would vote whether to adopt it.
- Our country was founded on the concept of self-government. 15 of 23 MD Counties have adopted Home Rule (9 Charter Home Rule, 6 Code Home Rule). For Cecil County not to have self-governing authority more than 200 years after our nation’s independence is unjust, undemocratic and condescending.
- Absence of home rule has resulted in developers, not residents, determining Cecil County’s future. With the coming of BRAC this can only get worse.
- All our neighboring counties have some form of home rule. Adopting home rule would allow us to have more control in responding to development pressures and planning and preparing for growth.

Cecil Land Use Alliance
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