

SB 196

Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

Chairman Tyson and Honorable Senators:

I am sorry I will not be able to testify in person at the committee hearing on January 10. I have been summoned for jury duty the week of January 8th. I have to reserve the time for that civic duty.

We are in support of this bill as this will be a great help to cities.

Growing cities, such as Bel Aire, often find it very difficult to support the needs of citizens for police, fire, roads, water and sewer while trying to keep taxes at a competitive level.

In 2022 we had 198 new building permits and 142 in 2023. Those represent about 5% growth year over year.

For these same two years Bel Aire has made slight reductions in mill levies. While this did not lower taxes, it slowed the increase. But we are faced with the need for more personnel and infrastructure to support the growth. Funding LAVTR will go a long way in helping our citizens with the tax burden.

Please keep in mind a couple of years ago SB 13 put into place the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR). When we do our 2025 budget and have LAVTR to consider, the mill levy needed to achieve revenue neutral goes down. For some cities, they will still need to exceed RNR. Bel Aire could be in that position. Other cities will be able to further reduce the mill levy by the receipt of the LAVTR. Regardless of the particular situation of any city, funding LAVTR will at least slow the growth in needed taxes and in many cases give cities a better opportunity to lower the mill levy.

This is a great way to help growing cities and provide needed tax relief to all citizens.

Please pass this bill so that we can lower the tax burden on our citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Benage,

Mayor, City of Bel Aire