

Legislative Testimony (online submissions) 4-17-2023

Timestamp	Full Name	Email Address	Home Address	City	Zip Code	Are you representing yourself?	What organization or whom do you represent?	Legislation	Position	Remarks	Attachment
04/17/2023 10:53:51	David Morsberger	dave@morsberger.com	1241 Village Lake Dr	Davidsonville	MD	Yes		Bill 13-23aa: Licenses & Registrations – Special Event Permit (amended)	Oppose	See attached. Tried to be brief.	YES
04/16/2023 20:25:44	Anna Chaney	anna@honeysharvest.com	5801 Brookwood Road	Lothian		20711 Yes		Bill 13-23aa: Licenses & Registrations – Special Event Permit (amended)	Oppose		YES
04/17/2023 10:50:38	Alan Lang	alanlang1@verizon.net	242 Armstrong Lane	Pasadena		21122 Yes		Bill 13-23aa: Licenses & Registrations – Special Event Permit (amended)	Oppose	I am writing in opposition to Bill 13-23 An Ordinance concerning: Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting I oppose the amended bill as presented as I believe it suppresses our basic rights to assemble. The fact that the statement in the current legislation stating, "The requirement for the license shall not infringe on the freedom of the right to assemble" was not added to this bill speaks volumes as to intent. Consequently, I am asking the Council to withdraw the bill or amend it to create a process where we notify the County of our intent to peacefully assemble instead of the proposed process requiring us to seek permission to exercise our right to assemble. If the Council should seek to pass this bill, there are numerous problems with terminology and various contradictions that resulted from the more than 20 amendments that were passed. One would think that any bill needing that many amendments is flawed and should be withdrawn. The errors that I believe should be addressed are listed on the following pages plus my list of proposed amendments. Thank you for your consideration of my opinions. Alan Lang 242 Armstrong Lane Pasadena, MD 21122 410-336-9745 Alanlang1@verizon.net	YES
04/03/2023 11:34:40	Robert Askin	obb@aol.com	123 Windermere Ave, # 1831	GREENWOOD LAKE, NY		10925 Yes		Bill 13-23		Respectfully, I'm writing in opposition of Bill 13-23 as currently proposed as it could negatively impact the Maryland Renaissance Festival of Crownsville. As one of the best fairs of its kind in the nation, MDRF attracts artisans and performers from around the country. My wife and I travel every weekend during the fair from NY. A fair we provide part-time jobs to 4-8 local workers. But our business at the fair requires months of preparation and advanced scheduling. Bill 13-23 could have the negative effect of causing unexpected cancellations and disruptions. Please respect the current special exceptions zoning that allows the fair to operate and reject Bill 13-23. Respectfully, Robert Askin (Silver Star Artworks)	
04/17/2023 10:39:27	Elle Bassett	elle@arundelrivers.org	88 Tarragon Lane	Edgewater		21037 No	Arundel Rivers Federation	Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of Ordinance 19-23: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended). Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations. Ordinance 19-23 aims to reduce plastic pollution within the county and incentivize the use of reusable bags. This will ultimately result in less plastic bags littering and polluting our local environment and waterways. Arundel Rivers Federation installed a trash trap in 2017 in a stream flowing in to the South River. The trap collected hundreds of plastic shopping bags in, preventing their entry into the South River and the Chesapeake Bay. Many streams in suburban and urban watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay region are similarly littered with plastic bags, clogging streams, causing erosion, and degrading habitat. Anne Arundel County has over 533 miles of shoreline and our waterways define who we are as a community and society. It is vital that we begin to take actions to curb the amount of waste we produce within our own communities. Ordinance 19-23 will incentivize the use of reusable bags by charging a small fee for use of single use plastics. This will be achieved through an equitable public education campaign. Arundel Rivers Federation respectfully requests the Anne Arundel County Council PASS Ordinance 19-23, to reduce single use plastic bags entering our local waterways and to become a leader among Maryland jurisdictions.	YES
04/17/2023 10:20:19	John W. Breen	breen.jw.esq@gmail.com	3214 chrisland dr	Annapolis		21403 Yes		Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	Testimony AAC BILL 19-23 04172023	YES
04/17/2023 10:10:33	Georgia Lightfoot	galightfoot@comcast.net	577 KEVINS DRIVE	ARNOLD		21012 Yes		Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	I'm thrilled to see this on the agenda, as it's way overdue. I can't think of one argument against this important issue. Plastic straws too! Surrounding counties and states have already taken this important step. Let's do it! Thanks.	
04/17/2023 7:39:17	Heidi Marozzi	heidimarozzi@gmail.com	3228 Chalford Ct	Davidsonville		21035 Yes		Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	I support a ban on plastic bags. Using reusable bags (or other product) takes little effort on the individual's part but would make a huge impact on our waste production. Plastic bags are difficult to recycle therefore end up in the trash or elsewhere. Additionally, with our proximity to major waterways, AACO should be doing all we can to protect them and the wildlife that lives in them. Thank you.	
04/16/2023 17:42:41	John W. Breen	Breen.jw.esq@gmail.com	3214 Chrisland Drive	Annapolis		21403 Yes		Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	Written Testimony to support Annapolis Ord 19-23.pdf	
04/14/2023 7:22:42	Lexi decker	lexidecker@gmail.com	345 Volley Road	Arnold		21012 Yes		Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	Strongly support banning plastic bags	
04/13/2023 22:53:44	Britt Griswold	None given	823 Holly Dr E	Annapolis		21409 Yes		Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	Plastic bags are a true bane to our environment and we need to take the leap onto a different path.	
04/17/2023 11:16:24	Christine Ignacio	stiggs311@gmail.com	111 Chester Avenue	Annapolis		21403 Yes		Bill 19-23a: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)	Support	As a recent transplant from San Francisco, where a plastic bag ban went into effect in 2007, followed by a statewide ban in California that went into effect in 2014, I have been disheartened by the still overwhelming use of plastic bags here. Studies show the bans to be highly successful - a CalRecycle study shows that six months after the ban was put in place, most transactions in which customers usually used plastic bags were completed without a customer buying a reusable bag; 86% of customers brought their own reusable bags or chose not to use a bag. There was a 61% reduction in paper bags provided to customers. Most notably, there was a 85% reduction in the number of plastic grocery bags provided to customers. It is beyond time to adopt similar measures.	
04/17/2023 9:15:33	Joanne Loria Wetterskog	jloriawetterskog@gmail.com	702 Pumpfrey Farm Drive	Millersville		21108 Yes		Bill 21-23: Zoning – Conditional Uses – Housing for the Elderly of Moderate Means	Oppose	Hello, Bill 21-23 The wording shares that it will assist with an aging population but leaves a lot of room for interpretation as to other age groups allowed to dwell in the occupant's residents or available housing in a unit. This could, and most likely will, lead to low-income housing. When housing is built, there are several surveys done to accurately assess the need in a community. Therefore, it is clearly known prior to building if there is actually a need for age-appropriate housing. Bill 21-23 is simply a tactic to allow a builder to build what he desires for profit and then AACO can rezone the area to meet their profit gain. I am against this Bill and its lack of integrity. It is imperative that we keep our aging population and neighborhoods safe. This Bill does not provide either. As a resident and tax payer I ask you to vote against this Bill and its intended corruption in already overpopulated areas. Thank you for your time, Joanne Loria Wetterskog	YES
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David Morsberger  
Davidsonville, MD

I am writing in opposition of Bill debate Bill 13-23, AN ORDINANCE concerning: Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting (As Amended)

Sorry, I tried to be brief. Excuse typos and grammar mistakes. I am running out of time.

My fundamental issue with this bill is it requires permission and a fee to exercise our First Amendment right to peacefully assemble.

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

Prior permission and requiring a fee sure seem like it is “abridging the freedom”

The only acceptable resolution from my perspective is to flip it to a NOTIFICATION from a PERMISSION procedure. In both cases the County Executive’s Office receives the information they requested and required to evaluate the event to determine the appropriate amount of county, police, and EMS resources. The County Executive’s Office still reserves the right to cancel an event if it will include illegal activity or will cause harm and destruction to event goers or community property.

The County Executive’s Office made it very clear that they want control. They were not attempting compromise when the failed amendments were proposed that completely flipped or partially flipped the process around, notification vs. permission. I thought the compromise amendment would pass and didn’t expect the co-sponsor to vote against it. 😊

Another point is this bill definitely seems like a solution looking for a problem. The County Executive’s Office kept bringing up the issues that occurred at the Astroworld event. We can all agree that the ten people who died are ten too many. The question is would the process outlined in this bill have prevented the deaths. I say NO. According to the information in the detailed analysis with timeline below, there was a “permission” process in place. The authorities were notified, did an analysis, created an event operations plan with multiple eventualities, reduced the approved crowd size, and provided what they thought were the appropriate county, police, and emergency resources. The root cause was the crowd got unruly and out of control which can always happen even after permission was granted.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astroworld\\_Festival\\_crowd\\_crush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astroworld_Festival_crowd_crush)

Important notes from the analysis:

- The 2021 festival was planned for two consecutive nights. Tickets were sold out in under an hour upon going on sale in May, and 100,000 in total were expected to attend. Authorities initially planned to limit attendees to 70,000 the first night, and that was reduced to 50,000 closer to the event, even though city fire codes permitted 200,000 people
- Houston Police Department (HPD) claimed to have 528 on-duty officers at the festival, including 367 for the night shift and 161 held over from the day, and early reporting indicated that event

organizer Live Nation provided another 755 security officers, including 505 event security staff, 91 armed private security officers and 76 off-duty officers from HPD paid privately. These numbers have been questioned.

Other points to note:

1. In the first session, Councilwoman Pickard stated that she didn't support fee exemptions because (paraphrased) the county staff needs to be paid to execute the process. Is there a plan to hire additional personnel to execute the new "special event" process or does the county plan to use the existing personnel that is currently being paid?
2. There are talks about appealing a ruling to deny an event. This according to the current County Code is unworkable and unfeasible. The County Code Appendix B, RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE OF THE BOARD OF APPEALS, state:

**Rule 1-103. Meetings.**

(a) *Frequency. Meetings of the County Board of Appeals shall be **held at the call of the Chair** and at such other times as the Board may determine, but in no event shall it be less than once a month.*

(b) *Quorum. Four members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business; except that three members shall constitute a quorum for hearings on special exceptions, variances, and administrative appeals. Site visits pursuant to Rule 4-101(g) are not governed by this rule.*

**Rule 2-101. Appeals.**

(a) *Time limit. All appeals from orders or decisions from which an appeal is authorized by law **shall be taken within 30 days of the date of such order or decision**, except where a different period is prescribed by law or rule, by the filing of a notice of appeal with the County Board of Appeals.*

**Rule 2-103. Fees.**

(a) *Generally. A notice of appeal may be accepted by the County Board of Appeals only when accompanied by the relevant fee listed below:*

(1) *Appeals from decisions of the Administrative Hearing Officer relating to reclassifications and special exceptions and appeals from decisions of the Department of Inspections and Permits relating to grading permits, \$400.*

(2) **All other appeals, \$250.**

(c) *Refund of fees. **No fees paid as required by this rule shall be returned to the appealing party**, except by order of the Board upon good cause shown.*

As you can see, the County Code appeal process does not provide what is required for the event organizer to appeal a denial.

3. The County Code states in TITLE 1. DEFINITIONS; GENERAL PROVISIONS that this a Class D civil offense and in TITLE 2. CIVIL OFFENSES AND FINES declares a \$125 fine for a Class D civil offense

**§ 11-1-105. Civil enforcement.**

(a) Generally. The County may enforce the provisions of this article through injunctive proceedings, an action for specific performance, or any other appropriate proceedings.

(b) Civil fines. It is a Class D civil offense for a person to violate any provision of this article.

**§ 9-2-101. Civil offenses and fines.**

(f) Schedule of fines. The general schedule of civil fines is as follows:

(4) **for a Class D civil offense: \$125 for the first violation;** \$500 for the second violation; and \$1,000 for the third or any subsequent violation

I am afraid this will create a new class of criminals, Special Event Criminals, who are willing to accept the fine instead of going through the bureaucratic and burdensome process.

As you can see by the information provided, this bill is not a fine wine that gets better over time. This is a bad bill at its core and must be defeated or significantly modified (At least, Permission -> Notification).

In this time of division, we need more events that bring people together. Also propose a workable alternative like a notification process instead of a permission process. No County Executive Administration (current or future) should have the power to control your right to peacefully assemble.

**Please defeat or significantly amend this bill!**

April 16, 2023

COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Bill No. 13-23

Licenses and Registrations – Special Events - Permitting

MEMO TO: County Council of Anne Arundel County

FROM: Anna Chaney, Lothian, MD

Dear Chair Smith and County Council Members,

This is regarding the Special Events Bill, No. 13-23, that appears to have been crafted without transparency, without industry input, and without clear purpose, thus posing intolerable ambiguities, inconsistencies, and infringements upon our rights.

According to a conversation I had with Pete Baron and a separate conversation with Greg Swain, the purpose of this bill is to provide for safety measures for special events. However, the purpose of the bill as written does not list “safety”. Without a clear and accurate purpose, the contents of the bill may not clearly reflect the goals or intentions.

This bill contains ambiguous language that reflects a lack of transparency, proposed implementation, and accountability. I am unaware of any efforts to fulfill standard procedures whereby industry stakeholders (in this case the special events industry) and county residents are consulted and surveyed for input regarding potential legislation impacting their ability to live in, work in, and enjoy this county freely.

This bill appears to potentially adversely affect the Anne Arundel County Fair, which supports Anne Arundel County Agriculture as well as the maritime industry, both of which I am a huge proponent. The existing special event permit applications in the county already require notice to all fire and life safety departments in the county. Therefore, I am, once again, confused as to the purpose and subsequent county “implementation” of this bill.

While I do appreciate the 22+ amendments that have been passed in a prudent attempt to “fix” this flawed and under-studied bill, I believe that this excessive number of amendments is also clearly indicative of the innate inadequacy of the due process in crafting such an onerous piece of legislation.

I respectfully request that you vote against this deleteriously crafted bill as amended as of April 16, 2023.

Thank you,

Anna Chaney  
410 991 4304  
Lothian, Maryland

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

April 17, 2023

Dear County Council President and County Council Members,

I am writing in opposition to Bill 13-23  
An Ordinance concerning:  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

I oppose the amended bill as presented as I believe it suppresses our basic rights to assemble. The fact that the statement in the current legislation stating, “The requirement for the license shall not infringe on the freedom of the right to assemble” was not added to this bill speaks volume as to intent.

Consequently, I am asking the Council to withdraw the bill or amend it to create a process where we notify the County of our intent to peacefully assemble instead of the proposed process requiring us to seek permission to exercise our right to assemble.

If the Council should seek to pass this bill, there are numerous problems with terminology and various contradictions that resulted from the more than 20 amendments that were passed. One would think that any bill needing that many amendments is flawed and should be withdrawn.

The errors that I believe should be addressed are listed on the following pages plus my list of proposed amendments.

Thank you for your consideration of my opinions.

Alan Lang  
242 Armstrong Lane  
Pasadena, MD 21122  
410-336-9745  
[Alanlang1@verizon.net](mailto:Alanlang1@verizon.net)

## Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

If the Council will not withdraw Bill 13-23 or modify Bill 13-23 to create a process where we notify the County of our intent to peacefully assemble instead of the proposed process requiring us to seek permission to exercise our right to assemble, then I believe the Council should change the following portions of the bill.

- The current Article 11-11-101(b) requires the issuance of a “license”, while the proposed bill requires the issuance of a “permit”. On page 2, line 44 of the proposed bill, a “permit” is defined as a “special permit”. From a technical writing perspective, this is not a usable definition. It seems odd that the Department of Inspections and Permits was only issuing “licenses per Article 11 and not issuing any “permits” until this bill was proposed. Per Article 14, the Department of Recreation and Parks issues “permits”.
- Is there a legal difference between a “license” and a “permit”? I could not find a definition of “permit” anywhere in Article 11 (Licenses and Registration) or in Article 14 (Recreation and Parks). Additionally, Article 11 does not define “license”.
- On page 2, line 16 and lines 26-27 define eventual exceptions to the special event permit process (Agritourism, and Farm or Agricultural Heritage), but another exception (Renaissance Festival) and its specific definition in Article 18 (18-11-127) is not defined.
- On page 2, lines 49 through 52, the terms “activity” and “regularity or permanence” are not defined. It makes it difficult for one to know whether one needs to apply for a special event permit when one does not understand the terminology.

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

- Page 2, lines 49-55 and Page 3, lines 5-11 list three requirements for an event to be considered “special”. Since the second requirement on page 3, lines 5-8 ends with an “or”, one would infer that if any of these three situations apply, then the event is “special”. However, during testimony, I believe I heard the administration state that all three must occur for an event to be considered “special”. If the latter is true, than the “o” on page 3, line 8, should be changed to “and”.
- Pages 2 and 3 define what is and is not a special event but these definitions include terms not defined or not defined until after the definition of “special event”. It would be less confusing if the term “special event was defined in its own subsection after all the key phrases used to define it are described. The terms “sponsor” and “vigil” are not defined until after they are used in the definition of what is and what is not a “special event”. Also, the term, “spontaneous response” is not defined at all.
- Page 3, lines 22-34 list specific events that are not considered to be special events. However, Title 2 (Amusements), Subtitle 7 (Fund Raising Events) lists outdoor activities such as fund raising carnivals hosted by non-profit groups such as Volunteer Fire Companies, Fraternal organizations, Veteran organizations, religious organizations, athletic organizations, and other charitable organizations that could attract crowds greater than 500. Since they are not specifically listed as exceptions, are they subject to the “special event” permitting process?
- On page 3, lines 33-34, should the specific subsection for the Renaissance Festival in Article 18 (18-11-127) be listed to be consistent with the definitions of Agritourism, and Farm or Agricultural Heritage on page 2?
- On page 3, lines 36-37, should the term, non-profit organization” be added to the list of those considered to be a sponsor?



## Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

- Page 3, lines 44-45, requires a “person” to obtain a permit. Shouldn’t the term “sponsor” be substituted for “person” since all the later text addresses the the role of the sponsor who obtained the permit?
- On page 3, lines 54-55, it states that the permit shall be in a format provided by the “Department”. “Department” is not defined in this bill, but ii is defined to be the Department of Inspections and Permits per 11-1-101. Later in the text, the bill uses the more nebulous term “County” when describing who is making decisions about the permit process.
- It appears that the Department of Inspections and Permits may not be the group establishing the permit application format. According to the Auditor’s Review of Legislation for the March 20, 2023 Council Meeting for Bill 13-23, Page 2 states that, “The Administration plans to create a special events workgroup. This workgroup will review applications submitted for special events, determine when to alter or waive application filing deadlines, and determine when to waive an application fee or payment requirements for all or a portion of the special services charges. Modifications to permit applications will be determined by agencies and their individual requirements.”
- On page 4, lines 21-24, item 8 uses the undefined terms “security” and “health and safety” as part of the required information to be supplied on the permit application by the sponsor.
- Page 4, line 19, item 7 requires the sponsor to provide the estimated attendance for the event. The bill is silent as to what occurs if one does not apply because the estimated attendance is less than 500 and many more than 500 attend what was a non-special event. Should this issue be addressed? For those who do apply, can the County deny or ask for modifications if the reviewers believe significantly more than the estimated number may attend?

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

- Page 4, lines 21-24. In the original law addressing parades, the sponsor would apply for a license, and the County would supply the necessary security, health and safety resources. How will the parade organizers know what to submit? Additionally, now the parade sponsor will have to pay the County for these services unless the County waives the fee or the sponsor contracts others to provide it.
- According to the Auditor review, there were 64 parades that cost the County \$117,433 for these services. On a simple average basis, each parade sponsor will now need to pay \$1,834.89 when it only cost \$25 the year before. Having to pay that amount of money for what was traditionally free and in the police and fire budgets, can seriously impact our rights to assemble. We can assemble, if we pay for it.
- Page 4, lines 29-30, item 10 is so vague it can be cited to delay or deny permit applications for events that the administration does not like. How can one successfully apply for a permit when not all of the parameters for an application are specifically listed? This clause can open the Administration and the Council for discrimination suits. I believe it should be deleted.
- Page 4, lines 32-36, item C leaves the Administration and the Council open for discrimination suits. Without a definition of what constitutes the “best interest of the County”, denied sponsors can compare their application to those who received waivers and demand, “Why them, and not us”.
- Page 4, line 49 introduces the term “general welfare”.. This term is undefined. Moreover, it is not listed as a permit application requirement per page 8, lines 21-24, item 8. How can the sponsors ensure that they have met the general welfare requirements when that information was not requested?

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

- Page 5, lines 12-13, item 5 is poorly written. Very few, if any, sponsors can safely control anticipated spectators or participants. Either they are going to hire a security firm or seek these services from the County. How does item 5 differ from item 7 on page 5, line 18?
- Page 5, lines 15-30, items 6 through 9 contained the undefined terms “inadequate” or “insufficient”. Where do the sponsors go to determine what is considered “adequate” or “sufficient” resources so that they have a better chance of making plans to meet County requirements or to have grounds for disputing County claims that plans are inadequate or insufficient?
- Page 5, lines 47-49, item 13 describes a situation where an already approved special permit exists for the same date as a new application by another sponsor and the approved permit would use all the County resources sought by this new application, the new application can be denied. According to the Auditor’s review, both the Fire Department and the Police Department stated that they did not anticipate a change in workload from this bill and had the necessary staffing to handle the special events by reallocating resources and using overtime.
- Page 6, lines 4-5, item 1 uses the undefined term “general welfare”, which is not required information sought in the permit application process per Page 4, lines 21-24, item 8.
- Page 6, lines 14-16, item D states that the adequate level of staffing for special events [is] based on the undefined phrase, “best practices and generally accepted public safety standards, whose source is not cited. How can a sponsor properly plan to meet these requirements if these standards are not made public?

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

- Page 6, lines 27-34 (application fees). It would be much less confusing if the bill simply stated that no application fee is charged unless it is filed less than 90 days before the planned event. Currently, we know a \$100 fee is charged if a sponsor files less than 90 days before the planned event, but the reader is not told what the fee is if the application is filed 90 or more days in advance. One is left to ASSUME that the fee may be zero. Having assumptions made is not good technical writing for regulations.
- Page 6, lines 42-58, item B lists those groups whose sponsor may be exempt from paying an application fee for being in the best interest of the County. By listing 6 organizations, does this mean they are subject to the permit application process and could have the \$100 late fee waived? Based on page 3, lines 29-31, item 4, an Agricultural Heritage Site is exempt from the special event process, so how could it be subject to an application fee?
- Page 6, lines 46-48, items 1 and 2 list two undefined organizational types (Education Institution and Community Association).
- Page 6, lines 57-58, item 6. The County will waive a late fee for a sponsor that has a Recreation and Parks permit and a special events permit. Does that mean that a sponsors who normally get their permits from the Department of Recreation and Parks will also have to file a special events permit application if their event meets this bill's definitions?
- Page 7, lines 3-6 and lines 15-19, items A and B1. Both of these sections describe how the Renaissance Festival should pay for any County services provided. However, Per page 3, lines 33-34, item 5, the Renaissance Festival is not a special event. Perhaps these amended items would be better placed in Section 18-11-127.

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

- Page 7, lines 33-48. These sections describe how the Renaissance Festival should pay for any County services provided. However, Per page 3, lines 33-34, item 5, the Renaissance Festival is not a special event. Perhaps these amended items would be better placed in Section 18-11-127.

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

I oppose the amended bill as presented and I am asking the Council to add the following amendments

- **Would you please seek an amendment to restore the following statement that was removed from the current regulations concerning parade permits to proposed section 11-11-103 (A), on page 3, line 26? “THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT SHALL NOT INFRINGE ON THE FREEDOM OF THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE”**
- If the current Department of Recreations and Parks (DRP) special events permit process will not be superseded by this bill, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, SPECIAL EVENTS TO BE HELD IN COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS BY CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THIS TITLE AND WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE CURRENT PERMIT PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS IN ITS SPECIAL EVENT AND CHARITABLE FUND-RAISING GUIDELINES.**
- If the current DRP special events permit process will be superseded by this bill, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-102(A), on page 3, by adding a second sentence at line 18 that states, THE CURRENT SPECIAL EVENTS PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS IN ITS SPECIAL EVENT AND CHARITABLE FUND-RAISING GUIDELINES IS SUPERSEDED BY THIS TITLE**
- If the intent of the administration is to exclude regular season athletic games from the special events permit process, that intent would be clearer if regular season athletic games were specifically listed as an exception in section 11-11-101(9)(II) on page 3. **Would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, REGULAR SEASON TEAM SPORTS GAMES ARE NOT A SPECIAL EVENT.**

Opposition to Bill 13-23, An Ordinance concerning  
Licenses and Registrations – Special Events – Permitting

- If the current DRP process for issuing permits for sports tournaments will continue, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, RECREATIONAL SPORTS TOURNAMENTS TO BE HELD ON COUNTY AND SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THIS TITLE AND WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE CURRENT TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS.**
- If the current DRP process for granting tournament permits will be superseded, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-102(A), on page 3, by adding a second sentence at line 18 that states, THE CURRENT SPORTS TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS IS SUPERSEDED BY THIS TITLE.**
- **Would you please seek an amendment to add a subsection 19 to section 11-11-104 (B), on page 5, after line 23 that reads, “THE COUNTY SHALL INCLUDE A HYPERLINK REFERENCE ON THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION THAT ACCESSES THE CRITERIA THE COUNTY WILL USE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SPONSOR’S PLAN ADDRESSING THE SITUATIONS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTIONS 5 THROUGH 12 ARE ADEQUATE AND SUFFICIENT”?**
- **Would you please seek an amendment to add a second sentence to proposed section 11-11-104 (D), on page 5, line 41 that reads, “THE COUNTY SHALL INCLUDE A HYPERLINK REFERENCE ON THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION THAT ACCESSES THE CRITERIA THE COUNTY WILL USE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SPONSOR’S PLAN FOR SECURITY AND SAFETY IS ADEQUATE”?**
- **Would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, ANY EVENT SPONSOR THAT HAS RECEIVED A PERMIT FROM A COUNTY DEPARTMENT PRIOR TO THE**

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**ENACTMENT OF THIS TITLE FOR AN EVENT THAT WILL OCCUR  
AFTER ENACTMENT IS NOT REQUIRED TO SEEK A SPECIAL  
EVENTS PERMIT.**

The following pages contain my rationale as to why these proposed amendments would improve this bill.

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At the hearing on April 3, would you please ask the administration to discuss the following points and introduce the proposed amendments:

- Why was the following statement contained in the current regulation not included in the proposed bill?
  - 11-11-101(e) **Issuance.** The requirement for the license shall not infringe on the freedom of the right to assemble.
  - **Would you please seek an amendment to restore this statement to proposed section 11-11-103 (A), on page 3, line 26?**
  - For example, the amendment could be to change line 26 to read, “THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT SHALL NOT INFRINGE ON THE FREEDOM OF THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE. An application for a permit shall be:”
  
- What was the basis used by the Administration to define “Public Assembly” As a “... group of 50 or more persons collected together in one place for the same purpose.”? (11-11-101(8), Page 2, lines 36-37)
  - Why 50? Does a group that small really need to submit a plan showing how the sponsor plans to ensure the security of the special event and the health and safety of those attending? (11-11-103(b)(8), Page 3, lines 53-56)?
  - Would I need a security guard if I sponsor a class reunion picnic for 50 people who are 68 years old at Downs Park pavilion that holds 100? Would I need one if I had 100 people register to attend?
  - I believe at the March 20 hearing Mr. Volke asked whether 50 may be too low a threshold for requiring a special event permit.
  
  - **Would you please seek an amendment to increase the minimum public assembly group size from 50 to 500 in section 11-11-101(8), on page 3, line 26?**

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- How does this amended bill, that no longer charges an application fee unless the application is submitted fewer than 60 days in advance, affect the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) current permit process for special events, which charges application fees for charitable organizations to use County parks or trails for fund raising?
  - The current bill was amended to drop the application fee of \$50 and only charge an application fee of \$100 if the application is filed less than 60 days prior to the special event (11-11-105(A)(1) on page 6, lines 1-3.
  - The DRP charges charitable organizations that want to use County parks and trails for a special event an application fee and an attendance fee (See page 3 of the following form for the fee schedule)  
<https://www.aacounty.org/departments/recreation-parks/parks/trails/forms-and-publications/special-events-guidelines.pdf>
  - To clarify the relationship of the proposed bill with the current DRP procedures for special events, please state whether the current DRP special events permit process will continue or be superseded by this bill.
  - If the current DRP special events permit process will not be superseded, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, SPECIAL EVENTS TO BE HELD IN COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS BY CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THIS TITLE AND WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE CURRENT PERMIT PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS IN ITS SPECIAL EVENT AND CHARITABLE FUND-RAISING GUIDELINES.**
  - If the current DRP process will be superseded, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-102(A), on page 3, by adding a second sentence at line 18 that states, THE CURRENT SPECIAL EVENTS PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS IN ITS SPECIAL EVENT AND CHARITABLE FUND-RAISING GUIDELINES IS SUPERSEDED BY THIS TITLE.**

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- How does this amended bill affect the DRP permit process for regular season athletic games held on County and school athletic fields?
  - Section 11-11-101(9)(I) attempts to describe which special events, including athletics, are subject to the permit process and lists 3 situations where, if any pertain, a permit is required (if the event is not held indoors). However, I believe the language is so vague that it is difficult to determine whether recreational sports such as football, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, and baseball are subject to this special events permit process. If the games would be considered a special event, would the special event permit process be in addition to or replace the current DRP permit process?
  - These team sports games will probably meet the definition of a public assembly (group of at least 50 or more persons) when counting two teams of players and their respective parents and they would meet special event criteria number 1 as the games would require the “specific and exclusive use of ...other public property ...”. Thus, one could consider team sports games a special event depending on the interpretation of the “regularity and permanence throughout the year” clause on page 2, lines 40-41.
  - What is meant by the undefined phrase, “...does not have regularity or permanence throughout the year”? Do athletics need to have both “regularity” and “permanence” to be excluded from the special permit process, or just need one of them? These sports are seasonal, so they are played every spring or fall, which could meet the undefined “regularity” test, but do they meet the undefined “permanence throughout the year” test?
  - If the intent of the administration is to exclude regular season athletic games from the special events permit process, that intent would be clearer if regular season athletic games were specifically listed as an exception in section 11-11-101(9)(II) on page 3.
  - **Would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, REGULAR SEASON TEAM SPORTS GAMES ARE NOT A SPECIAL EVENT.**
  - If regular season games were to be interpreted as a special event, the permit process would be a nightmare to administer.

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- How does this amended bill affect the DRP permit process for recreational sports tournaments held on County and school athletic fields?
  - Based on the definitions in this bill, it would seem that recreational sports tournaments held on county and school athletic fields would be subject to the special events process. However, the bill does not address the status of the current DRP process for granting sports tournament permits that it has done successfully for decades. Will the tournaments be exempt from the Special Events process and continue to use the DRP permit process, will the bill supersede the current DRP process for permitting tournaments, or will the Special Events process be in addition to the current DRP permit process?
  - To clarify the relationship of the proposed bill with the current DRP procedures for granting sports tournament permits, please state whether the current DRP special events permit process will continue or be superseded by this bill.
  - If the current DRP process will not be superseded, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, RECREATIONAL SPORTS TOURNAMENTS TO BE HELD ON COUNTY AND SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THIS TITLE AND WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE CURRENT TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS.**
  - If the current DRP process for granting tournament permits will be superseded, **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-102(A), on page 3, by adding a second sentence at line 18 that states, THE CURRENT SPORTS TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROCESS PROMULGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS IS SUPERSEDED BY THIS TITLE.**

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- What are the criteria upon which County will base its decisions to deny, modify, or cancel special events permits?
  - Not stating the criteria in the proposed bill, or at least requiring the County to provide sources for the criteria in the permit application, allows the County broad leeway in deciding whose permits are approved or rejected, which could open the County to charges of favoritism. What may be the intent of the bill now, can change over time as administrations change. The event sponsors need to know where to find the criteria that will be used to review their permit applications.
  - In section 11-11-104(B) on page 4, lines 39-57 and page 5, lines 1-2, the bill lists 7 situations using the undefined terms of “inadequate” or “insufficient” that could prevent the issuance of a special event permit. These situations are:
    - Inadequate traffic facilities
    - Inadequate security or emergency response services
    - Inadequate venue [size]
    - Insufficient toilet facilities
    - Insufficient refreshment facilities
    - Insufficient ingress or egress for emergencies
    - Insufficient litter control and recycling procedures
  - Do the definitions for adequacy or sufficiency for these 7 situations exist, and if so, where can the sponsors find the criteria that the permit reviewers will use to determine the adequacy or sufficiency of these 7 situations? By having access to the criteria, the sponsors would have a better chance of creating plans that would comply with these 7 situations.
  - **Would you please seek an amendment to add a subsection 19 to section 11-11-104 (B), on page 5, after line 23 that reads, “THE COUNTY SHALL INCLUDE A HYPERLINK REFERENCE TO THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION THAT ACCESSES THE CRITERIA THE COUNTY WILL USE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SPONSOR’S PLAN ADDRESSING THE SITUATIONS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTIONS 5 THROUGH 12 ARE ADEQUATE AND SUFFICIENT”?**

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- In the permit review process, the County shall determine the adequate level of staffing for the special event based on “best practices and generally accepted public safety standards.” (11-11-104(D), Page 5, lines 39-41).
  - What is the source of these “best practices” and public safety standards?
  - To lessen the chances of having our permits rejected or being subjected to paying higher costs to use County staffing, shouldn't this guidance be published?
  - I believe Mr. Volke requested that a resource cost matrix for using County staffing should be included in the bill.
  - Similarly, I believe the bill should require that the permit application contain a hyperlink to the guidance the County will use to determine adequate staffing.
  - **Would you please seek an amendment to add a second sentence to proposed section 11-11-104 (D), on page 5, line 41 that reads, “THE COUNTY SHALL INCLUDE A HYPERLINK REFERENCE TO THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION THAT ACCESSES THE CRITERIA THE COUNTY WILL USE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SPONSOR’S PLAN FOR SECURITY AND SAFETY IS ADEQUATE”?**
- Once this bill takes effect (45 days after it becomes law), what will become of any events that received a permit from DRP that would now be classified as a special event?
    - Would we need to apply for the special events permit, or would we be exempt?
    - **would you please seek an amendment to section 11-11-101(9)(II), on page 3, by adding a section 3 after line 10 (A funeral procession) that states, ANY EVENT SPONSOR THAT HAS RECEIVED A PERMIT FROM A COUNTY DEPARTMENT PRIOR TO THE ENACTMENT OF THIS TITLE FOR AN EVENT THAT WILL OCCUR AFTER ENACTMENT IS NOT REQUIRED TO SEEK A SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT.**

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In addition to these suggested amendments, I believe the majority of my written testimony from March 20 is still germane.

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Hon. Peter Smith, Chair  
Anne Arundel County Council  
Annapolis Maryland

April 17, 2023

Dear Chair Smith and members of the County Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT of Ordinance 19-23: Ban the Bag Act of Anne Arundel County (amended)**. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Ordinance 19-23 aims to reduce plastic pollution within the county and incentivize the use of reusable bags. This will ultimately result in less plastic bags littering and polluting our local environment and waterways. Arundel Rivers Federation installed a trash trap in 2017 in a stream flowing in to the South River. The trap collected hundreds of plastic shopping bags in, preventing their entry into the South River and the Chesapeake Bay. Many streams in suburban and urban watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay region are similarly littered with plastic bags, clogging streams, causing erosion, and degrading habitat.

Anne Arundel County has over 533 miles of shoreline and our waterways define who we are as a community and society. It is vital that we begin to take actions to curb the amount of waste we produce within our own communities. Ordinance 19-23 will incentivize the use of reusable bags by charging a small fee for use of single use plastics. This will be achieved through an equitable public education campaign.

Arundel Rivers Federation respectfully requests the Anne Arundel County Council PASS Ordinance 19-23, to reduce single use plastic bags entering our local waterways and to become a leader among Maryland jurisdictions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett  
South, West & Rhode Riverkeeper  
Arundel Rivers Federation



**Testimony to Anne Arundel Council Support Bill 19-23 BAN the (plastic) BAG April 17, 2023  
Attorney John Breen 3214 Chrisland Dive. Annapolis MD 21403**

This bill is a first step, a beginning to restore quality to our human bodies and food and water sources. It is supported by the following facts, which are not in dispute.

Plastic waste is the most prevalent type of Marine debris found in our oceans and Lakes. Those that are less than 5 millimeters in length (size of a sesame seed) are microplastics. **The NOAA Marine Debris program (National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Silver Spring Maryland)** is conducting studies to determine the harmful effect on the human body and fish and ocean food sources in our diet. This information is available on their website. Water is one of the worst sources of microplastics. We all use it.

Most microplastic pollution comes from textiles, tires and city dust which account for over 80% of all microplastic in the environment. The existence of microplastics in the environment is often established through aquatic studies.

<https://maritimeaquarium.org>

With [skyrocketing plastic production, low levels of recycling, and poor waste management](#), between 4 and 12 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean each year—enough to cover every foot of coastline on the planet! And that amount is [projected to triple](#) in the next 20 years. Let that sink in for a moment. Oceanic Society.org

- **Open Microplastics** were detected in **human blood** for the first time, according to a study that may indicate the potential for particles to travel to organs. Scientists found 17 out of the 22 healthy people they took samples from had quantifiable amounts of plastic particles in their blood.

[Microplastics Found in Blood for the First Time, Study Says](#)

[www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-25/microplastics-found-in-blood-for ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-25/microplastics-found-in-blood-for-...)

The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/environment> Oct 7 2022

The breast milk research published in the journal Polymers, found microplastics composed of polyethylene, PVC and polypropylene. In mothers breast milk.

**N.B. The State of Conn legislature has banned all plastic bags effective 07012021, and requires payment for paper bags.**

**This is a time to begin the process of creating remedies. Amendments or referrals to work groups or studies will only create delay. Act Now!**

Hello,

Bill 21-23

The wording shares that it will assist with an aging population but leaves a lot of room for interpretation as to other age groups allowed to dwell in the occupant's residents or available housing in a unit. This could, and most likely will, lead to low-income housing. When housing is built, there are several surveys done to accurately assess the need in a community. Therefore, it is clearly known prior to building if there is actually a need for age-appropriate housing. Bill 21-23 is simply a tactic to allow a builder to build what he desires for profit and then AACO can rezone the area to meet their profit gain. I am against this Bill and its lack of integrity. It is imperative that we keep our aging population and neighborhoods safe. This Bill does not provide either. As a resident and tax payer I ask you to vote against this Bill and its intended corruption in already overpopulated areas.

Thank you for your time,  
Joanne Loria Wetterskog