

The City of Bowie supports the legislation. The City of New Carrollton opposes the legislation because they believe the 6 inches would be difficult to enforce and would create a surface full of weeds.

During the February 4th meeting, it was agreed upon that additional review of the legislation was needed. The Health Department and the Department of Environmental Resources offered a compromise.

According to the two departments, currently commercial storage racks are available in heights of 1-3/4 inches, 3 inches and 6 inches. Since 2 of the commercially available racks would still not meet the requirement of the new legislation, their suggestion was to lower the standard to 8 inches. Then the racks could be placed upon a standard cinder block (8" x 8" x 16") to meet the 8 inch requirement. A requirement would be to keep the area beneath free of all plant growth as well as other materials and debris to address concerns about creating shelter and harborage for rodents.

There was some concern regarding the 18 inches above the ground requirement in the existing law. This height could be very dangerous for children playing in residential areas. The bill as written would cover both residential and commercial areas. The Committee discussed having a distinction between residential and commercial requirements.

The Committee voted to amend the bill to allow for a 6 inch height requirement for property improved by a one or two family dwelling and maintained the 18 inch height requirement for other properties. Page 2, line 7 and 8 were amended to reflect the Committee's recommendation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/FISCAL IMPACT

(Includes reason for proposal, as well as any unique statutory requirements)

The County Code currently requires "lumber, boxes, barrels, bricks or stones, and similar materials" to be placed 18 inches above the ground, in order to prevent rodent infestation. This requirement applies to the stacking of firewood, which is often stored in commercially available racks that are not 18 inches above the ground. This legislation amends the elevation requirement in order to facilitate the use of these storage racks, while still providing adequate protection against rodent infestation.