

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**  
**DONALD HUTCHINSON**  
**PRESIDENT, MARYLAND REGION**  
**SUNTRUST BANK**  
**FORMER BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Don Hutchinson, former Maryland delegate and senator and Baltimore County Executive from 1978 to 1986, knows the state and local political scene. He is very knowledgeable about economic development, having also served as President of Maryland Economic Growth Associates, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Baltimore Committee.

Hutchinson said the theory of agricultural preservation did not exist until the 1950s, but it is now an issue. Property rights and eminent domain are issues today because farmers on the coast see their land holdings as their last hope for economic stability. There has been a debate on eminent domain centered on whether the government should have the right to take people's property for development. In recent years, we have seen white flight and middle class black flight from urban areas. There is a changed paradigm of government. The issues today are the same as the issues have been over time, but they are focused differently now.

Hutchinson grew up across the river from the Back River wastewater treatment plant. At the time, the river was relatively clean. As Baltimore City grew, decisions had to be made on where to put the wastewater treatment plant. It was located on Back River in 1912, causing massive fish kills. The river is now dead.

In the Baltimore area, people living within the Urban Rural Demarcation (URDA) line have municipal water and sewer service. Those living on the rural side of that line do not have municipal service. Baltimore County houses the water supply for 1.2 million people in the Baltimore area.

The growth plan for Baltimore County, developed during the 1960s and 1970s, has been followed in the years since. The decision was made to direct growth in Baltimore County toward White Marsh and Owings Mills. The consultant's report that resulted in the plan recommended that two more growth areas be established – around Belfast Road and the area north of Martin's West, off Security Boulevard. The county decided to go with only the two other growth areas, partly because the Belfast Road area is north of the URDA line.

In Maryland, it is easy for people to decide to live elsewhere and work in Maryland, since all areas of Maryland are within 45 miles of another state. The county executives of Baltimore and Howard counties are the strongest in the nation because they have no incorporated municipalities, thus no shared decision making, and they have full control of their budgets. The county commissioners in other counties depend more on the decisions of the General Assembly. The continuing paradigm is that decision makers come and go, but bureaucrats stay around.

When the decision was made to cluster growth at White Marsh and Owings Mills, Baltimore County put its highest density zoning in White Marsh. This caused no problem, because no one lived there at the time, and everyone wanted White Marsh to grow. By the end of County Executive Dennis Rasmussen's term in 1990, voters decided to oust Rasmussen, primarily because of growth, sprawl and gridlock. The new county executive, Roger Hayden, reduced the density in White Marsh, shifting the growth outward.

There are often shifts in political leaders because people want what they don't have, across the board. Both Montgomery and Howard counties currently have full employment. Environmental issues become more important when everyone is working. Water is not an infinite resource.

Decision makers make short-term decisions that have long-term impacts. There is a legacy to what they do. This requires a tremendous educational process, and the educators are the bureaucrats who have been in their jobs for years.

Don Hutchinson was first elected to office at age 21, and he freely admits he knew nothing. At the time, 31,000 people worked at Bethlehem Steel, making it the largest employer in Baltimore County. Hutchinson had to talk about Beth Steel when he talked to bond rating agencies. He took a two-day trip to Beth Steel headquarters in Pennsylvania, paid for by the company. After listening to the company's CEO for two days, he began to understand the tremendous impact of the company's decisions on eastern Baltimore County. These days, political leaders can't take such trips and learn from the experts. Today, bureaucrats need to tell decision makers that they know more, and then teach them the important lessons.

Today, Maryland is running out of land and we continue to have people who want to live here. There are no easy answers in development. However, there are some solutions, including infill, infrastructure development and smart growth. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process will bring new jobs to Maryland. These jobs won't all be in the military; many will be in banks and elsewhere. PNC Bank is buying Mercantile Bankshares because Maryland is a growing market. The market will dictate where people go.

People inside government have to share their knowledge with the decision makers. The bureaucrats are the educators. Economic development people should partner with the land use people, becoming partners instead of adversaries. Water and job growth are both legacies. We have great opportunities today.

In response to an audience question about who will be the next governor of Maryland, Hutchinson said Maryland is a Democratic state in a Democratic year. The two gubernatorial candidates are similar in style and appearance. It will be a close race, but he feels it is a Democratic year.

In response to another audience question, Hutchinson talked about the Parkton Landfill. At the time, Baltimore County was running out of landfill space. However, most decision makers make decisions "only as far as the next election." When Hutchinson was county executive, he made a decision not to build the Baltimore County landfill in Parkton. He decided

instead to put the landfill on Allender Road, where some mines had been, near a community that had supported him strongly. Although it was a difficult decision, he feels he made the environmentally correct one.