House Bill 150

Housing and Community Development - Adaptive Reuse

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

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From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 150. The bill creates a broader definition of adaptive reuse to include any project that converts existing buildings into new dwelling units. Additionally, HB 150 makes certain adaptive reuse projects eligible for loans under certain state affordable multifamily housing programs.

Nationally and statewide, policy-makers are being confronted by a historic shortage of affordable housing. The cause of the crisis is not due to a singular instance, but instead the result of a litany of decisions in both the public and private sectors. Similar to the cause, there exists no singular solution to this crisis. Policy-makers at all levels must be nimble in their solutions, adopting an "all of the above" approach if we are to right the ship.

HB 150 is a prime example of a nimble and adaptive policy solution. Both the adoption of a broad definition of adaptive reuse and the expansion eligibility for certain loans represent simple changes in policy that can have a significant impact. As the economy changes following the pandemic, many urban areas are plighted by wasted office space. In many former industrial centers, old factories and warehouses sit empty. The expansion of adaptive reuse allows for the creation of more affordable housing. From making downtown areas more resident-friendly, to reimagining former industrial sites, and everything in between – the recognition and advancement of adaptive reuse offers a path for many communities to reinvent themselves while also spurring the growth of badly needed affordable housing stock.

HB 150 is an easy and commonsense way to spur the creation of affordable housing, while also investing in communities reeling from historic changes in our economy. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 150.