



TESTIMONY FOR SB0203
Housing Innovation Pilot Program and Housing Innovation Fund - Establishment
(Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act of 2024)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Waldstreicher

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0203 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Maryland is facing a significant affordable housing crisis.

The Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act creates a five-year pilot program to reward counties that are doing creative things to fund affordable housing. The program provides matching funds for projects that are publicly owned, meet strict affordability standards (20% of units for income under 50% AMI and 40% under 60%) and meet prevailing wage requirements. In these mixed income projects, the revenue from higher-income renters first pays off the construction bonds and then goes back into the loan fund to support future projects.

Such social (publicly-owned, mixed-income) housing also gives local governments the opportunity to advance transportation and climate policy objectives.

As an example, Montgomery County has established itself as a national leader on building affordable housing. Using this model, the County has built 731 affordable units in only three years and has four additional projects in the pipeline with 2,000 units. This program would incentivize other local creative approaches by other Counties as well.

We believe that it is important to keep all residents housed, particularly those residents who are most at risk. This program allows us to meet that basic human need and create the green, transit-centric society we need to survive.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.