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To: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

From: **Alternative Dispute Resolution Section, Maryland State Bar Association**

Date: **February 9, 2024**

Subject: **HB 279 - Common Ownership Communities – Local Commissions – Requirements**

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) supports HB 279. This bill establishes a set of general rules, along with mechanisms to resolve disputes, for common ownership communities – generally known as condominium communities. We note that language on page 12, lines 10-19 provides for a party in a dispute to request mediation services. In common ownership communities, the use of mediation may be especially important because neighbors are likely to remain in the community. Learning to live together the community is essential to a peaceful and satisfying home life.

We believe that this specific language gives the parties an opportunity to settle their differences without the expense of going to court. At the same time, courts will benefit from the likely reduction in the number of cases filed which crowd our dockets.

Should you have any questions, please contact Erin Gable, Esq., Chair of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council, edgable@aacc.edu.