



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 424
Montgomery County – Housing Opportunities Commission – Alterations

This is a Montgomery County local bill that removes certain barriers to the creation of affordable housing by the county's affordable housing agency. The bill passed the House Delegation unanimously and has the support of the County Council.

Under state law, the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) is required to hold certain hearings and publish certain information in newspapers.

HB 424 would repeal an outdated and duplicative requirement that requires HOC to hold a hearing for any proposed affordable housing development before starting the formal development review process. This provision in state law dates back to 1957.

Montgomery County's development review process additionally requires a pre-submission community meeting and a public hearing before the Planning Board on submitted applications. Affordable housing developments that involve federal tax credits also require a separate public hearing. With three or more public hearings already required, there is no need for an additional pre-application public hearing.

This bill aligns with the Department of Housing and Community Development's 2024 legislative initiatives to streamline local development review processes.

Requiring an additional hearing at the start of the process adds time and expense to building desperately needed affordable housing. Montgomery County—and the entire state—is facing a dire housing shortage. In 2019, the Montgomery County Council unanimously approved a goal of building 10,000 additional housing units by 2030 as part of a metro DC regional effort and to address the current shortage of nearly 25,000 affordable housing units in our county.¹ To meet these needs, we need to remove unnecessary hurdles and delays from the development review process.

Additionally, this bill would repeal a requirement that HOC publish a summary of its annual financial report in a newspaper. HOC is already required under state law to post the entire financial report on its website. This newspaper advertising requirement is duplicative, costly, and not particularly effective at sharing the information with the public.

¹ Metro Washington Regional Fair Housing Plan, 2023
https://www.mwcoq.org/assets/1/6/Montgomery_County_Clean_web.pdf