



House Bill 279

Common Ownership Communities - Local Commissions - Requirements

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: February 6, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko and Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 279. As drafted, this bill could be interpreted to mandate counties to create local Common Ownership Community Commissions.

Broadly, Common Ownership Communities (COCs) are often thought of as a group of homes with their own governments and binding rules – namely condominium associations, cooperative housing corporations, and homeowner associations. COCs can be found in all 24 counties and have become a quintessential part of Maryland’s largely suburban development.

As drafted, counties have significant concerns that HB 279 would require each jurisdiction to create their own COC commissions, which would represent an extensive and burdensome unfunded mandate. *After speaking with the bill sponsor regarding intent and scope, MACo offers the following friendly amendments which will alleviate county concerns:*

- On page 5, strike lines 4-6 and insert, “(A) A LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAY ESTABLISH A LOCAL COMMISSION ON COMMON OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES.”
- On page 5, after line 6, insert, “A LOCAL COMMISSION ON COMMON OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES ESTABLISHED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF A COUNTY BY LOCAL LAW AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2024, SHALL COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS TITLE. A LOCAL COMMISSION ON COMMON OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES ESTABLISHED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF A COUNTY BY LOCAL LAW PRIOR OCTOBER 1, 2024, MAY COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS TITLE.

With these amendments, HB 279 would provide another tool in the toolbox for counties to assist COCs in their communities and to combat the current housing crisis. MACo would like to express our sincere gratitude for the sponsor’s willingness to engage in dialogue and find common ground. Counties urge the Committee to move forward with the changes suggested above.