

HEARING DATE: February 6, 2024
BILL NO: HB 131
COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation Committee
POSITION: Support
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 366-4224

TITLE: Housing Development Permit Applications – Local Reporting Requirements

BILL ANALYSIS:

House Bill 131 requires local jurisdictions with at least 250,000 residents to report yearly to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) information about housing development permit applications, including the number of applications received, approved, and rejected; the mean and median processing times for permit applications; any type of expedited permit application process the jurisdiction employs for housing development projects; and the number of development projects that benefited from said expedited permit application processes. Jurisdictions subject to this legislation are also required to publish the yearly report on their websites.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) supports HB 131. Given the different development review processes and building permit systems among local governments across the state, it is extremely difficult to quantify the amount of residential development occurring and the time it takes to go through the process. HB 131 is an important first step toward better understanding the challenges faced by local governments and the residential developers and contractors in going through the development approval and permitting process to bring new housing to the marketplace. It has been noted many times that uncertainty, lack of transparency, and inconsistency in residential development permitting processes increases the financial cost and risk associated with the construction of new housing units. Given the housing shortage experienced throughout Maryland, this is a very good start in getting valuable information to improve state and local decision making.

The reporting requirement in HB 131 targets jurisdictions with a 250,000-population and thereby limits the effect of this legislation to the eight largest jurisdictions in the state: Baltimore City, and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. Based on the latest US Bureau of Census 2022 *Annual Report New Housing Units Authorized for Construction by Building Permits*, 78% of the 19,346 new units permitted that year were in these eight counties.

Reporting statistical and other information on housing development permit processing to MDP and DHCD will allow the departments to better understand the challenges and barriers to housing in Maryland and adjust policies and practices accordingly. Based on the above reasons, the MDP respectfully recommends the Committee grant a favorable report on HB 131.