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To: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Jim Pauli, Chair, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Section Council of the MSBA, Government Affairs Committee

Date: February 12, 2025

Subject: SB-866- Common Ownership Communities- Ombudsman Unit;

Position: **Support** efforts to expand ADR to Common Ownership Communities;

The Maryland State Bar Association generally supports any efforts to expand the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution processes and any corresponding infrastructure to accomplish that goal.

Common Ownership Communities closely share and jointly govern their living space. This often creates conflict amongst the members of the community. Establishing an Ombudsman Unit in the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General is an important step towards encouraging a culture of conflict resolution within these Common Ownership Communities.

This is a cross-filed with the House Environment and Transportation Committee as HB 306. We urge a favorable Committee report and that you conform this bill to HB 306.

Again, the MSBA generally supports SB 866 and urges a favorable Committee Report and that it be conformed to HB-306.

Should you have any questions, please contact Jim Pauli at jim.pauli.ijs@gmail.com.