

Chapter 503

(Senate Bill 436)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Department of Labor – Study on Building Code Requirements for Single–Staircase Buildings

FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Department of Labor to study and make recommendations regarding building code requirements for single–staircase buildings; and generally relating to building code requirements for single–staircase buildings.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) In this section, “Department” means the Maryland Department of Labor.

(b) The Department shall:

(1) conduct a study on building code requirements for single–staircase buildings in the State and other states; and

(2) make recommendations regarding potential legislative or regulatory changes to authorize the construction of single–staircase buildings up to six stories above grade plane in the State for the purpose of increasing the affordable housing supply by reducing barriers to multifamily housing development.

(c) The study shall:

(1) survey and document a representative sampling of state and local laws, ordinances, and policies from across North America;

(2) analyze best practices for state and local governments when drafting building code requirements for single–staircase buildings up to six stories above grade, taking into consideration the following factors:

(i) the availability of an adequate water supply;

(ii) the presence and response capability of a professional fire department;

(iii) the practicability or feasibility of compliance with modern fire codes, including a comparison to the safety of the existing housing supply;

(iv) the practicability or feasibility of building in urban or infill settings;

(v) the viability of redevelopment or adaptive reuse of historic properties;

(vi) any impacts of laws, ordinances, or policies on:

1. housing development; or
2. the cost of housing; and

(vii) any other relevant factors, as determined by the Department;

and

(3) make legislative and regulatory recommendations, including potential amendments to the Maryland Building Performance Standards, to authorize the construction of single-staircase buildings up to six stories above grade plane in the State for the purpose of increasing the affordable housing supply by reducing barriers to multifamily housing development.

(d) In carrying out the study, the Department shall consult with:

(1) a fire engineer who is a faculty member at a public institution of higher education that has a fire protection program; ~~and~~

(2) a representative of ~~a union that represents firefighters~~ the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, designated by the President of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland;

(3) a representative of the Maryland State Firefighters Association, designated by the President of the Association;

(4) a representative of the Maryland Fire Chiefs Association, designated by the President of the Association;

(5) a representative of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association, designated by the President of the Association;

(6) a representative of the Office of the State Fire Marshal; and

(7) a representative of a Maryland nonprofit organization that advocates for safe and affordable housing.

(e) On or before December 1, ~~2025~~ 2026, the Department shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State

Government Article, the General Assembly, the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, and the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor, May 13, 2025.