



**House Bill 1406 – Land Use – Development – Middle Housing (Modest Home Choices Act of 2020)**

**Position: Oppose**

Maryland REALTORS® oppose HB 1406 which would force local governments to accept increased density on lots zoned for single-family residential dwellings.

The legislation would direct local governments to change comprehensive plans and adopt regulations that would eliminate unreasonable costs and delay for certain projects and increase density. While Maryland REALTORS® agree with the Sponsor that increased density and fewer regulatory requirements and delay will increase affordable housing, HB 1406 is too aggressive an approach at this time.

Last year, the Maryland Legislature passed another bill, HB 1045, which requires local governments to include a “housing element” in local comprehensive plans. That housing element requires local governments to consider the need for affordable housing. The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) is now working with a stakeholder group to determine how to implement the bill and assess county efforts in moving forward.

Concurrently, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is working on a housing needs assessment for the entire State and is expected to be finished in the coming year. REALTORS® believe both the MDP and DHCD efforts should be allowed to finish before moving forward with a proposal to override local single-family zoning.

However, while this may not be the time for legislation like this, if Maryland continues to fall behind in meeting affordable housing needs, extreme measures be necessary. Over the last two decades, the Maryland homeownership rate has fallen along with the percentage of first-time buyers. There are many factors contributing to this in addition to zoning, and we would encourage the Legislature to continue to focus on the growing problem.

For those reasons, the REALTORS® recommend an unfavorable report.

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