

March 3, 2020

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of House Bill 1406 (Land Use - Development - Middle Housing (Modest Home Choices Act of 2020)) with Amendment

Dear Chairman Barve:

The Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, supports House Bill 1406 (Land Use - Development - Middle Housing (Modest Home Choices Act of 2020)) with amendment.

This measure requires local governments to allow the development of middle-income housing units in certain areas, and prohibit the development of higher-income homes, in order to promote more affordable housing options throughout Maryland. Though we applaud the intent to alleviate Maryland's housing crisis and enable affordable housing options for our "missing middle" residents, this measure does not do enough to address Maryland's lack of diversity through our various jurisdictions, or consider that most of our planning is done on a local level as opposed to the State level. This bill should be amended to more specifically address zones and density to achieve its goals. The following are suggested additions that we believe would strengthen this bill:

1. This measure should apply to nonresidential zones that have underutilized parcels under industrial, commercial or retail zoning.
2. It should also allow more dense housing, including multifamily, without allowing an exemption for local governments based on compatibility.
3. Moratoria resulting from local Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO) should also be limited to a hard sunset, statewide.
4. To address Maryland's housing shortage at all income levels, this bill's application should not be indexed to index levels; instead, it should be open to all fair market housing production.
5. The "missing middle" or "middle housing" term should be widely defined as residential housing that is neither luxury, nor government- subsidized, nor income targeted housing.

We believe these changes will make this measure a stronger, more comprehensive approach to solving Maryland's housing crisis. For these reasons, MBIA respectfully thanks the Sponsor for his intent and collaboration, and requests the Committee adopt this amendment and give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: House Environment and Transportation Committee Members