



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Christiana Rigby
Councilmember

District 3

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0871

Accessory Dwelling Unit Authorization and Promotion Act

March 3, 2022

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Committee. I am writing to express my **strong support for SB0871**, legislation introduced by Senator Washington to expand housing opportunities and promote Accessory Dwelling Units in Maryland.

SB0871 would require each local legislative body in the State of Maryland to adopt legislation authorizing the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs are independent dwelling units that are located on existing single-family home lots. Accessory Dwelling Units are commonly inhabited by seniors, people with limited incomes, and young professionals who are seeking affordable places to live. This legislation will empower local jurisdictions and homeowners to provide these housing options in our community.

Maryland is currently in the midst of a housing crisis that has impacted communities across our state. People who want to live in our neighborhoods are prevented from doing so by rising costs, restricted housing supply, and a dearth of affordable options. In many respects, Maryland is behind the curve of adopting creative solutions to address this crisis. This legislation helps move our state forward in a positive direction by providing a pathway for accessory dwelling units statewide.

In May 2021, the Howard County Housing Opportunities Master Plan Task Force released its final plan and recommendations, which charts a roadmap for expanding housing affordability in Howard County. Among its many recommendations, the Master Plan called on the county to "increase the ability of homeowners to add accessory dwelling units to their properties." The report also highlighted that ADUs provide important housing options for diverse households of different ages and incomes.

It is typically uncommon for local legislators to ask the General Assembly to establish zoning requirements for local governments. However, as a local legislator in Howard County, I believe that State action on this issue is of the utmost importance. A statewide ADU law will

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ensure greater consistency and predictability for many homeowners who are interested in constructing an accessory dwelling unit on their property. Additionally, this legislation will ensure that local jurisdictions do not put onerous and overly prescriptive conditions on the construction of accessory dwelling units. The majority of ADUs are constructed by individual homeowners who want to provide an affordable place for family members to live while building equity in their homes. The process to create ADUs should be straightforward and easily to utilize for homeowners who are interested in building them.

SB0871 will empower homeowners to help address our housing affordability crisis by providing safe, sustainable, and accessible homes for family, friends, and future neighbors. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I respectfully encourage a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christiana Rigby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christiana Rigby
Howard County Councilmember, District 3