



House Bill 880 – Environment- Impact of Actions on Climate, Labor and Environmental Justice

Position: Unfavorable

Maryland REALTORS[®] supports balancing the needs of the communities impacted unequally by environmental impacts alongside the growing challenge of affordable housing. We are concerned that HB880 would not distinguish between permits that may impact environment health and those that assist in creating affordable and decent housing.

As an example, the Environmental Protection Agency conducts an Environment Justice (EJ) Screening which includes a “demographic” category. The EPA “demographic” factors include items like race, age, income, and unemployment rate, but does not include residential housing, blight or housing vacancies. The Maryland REALTORS[®] strongly recommends that residential housing be an EJ component of review for permits or that housing related permits be exempted from these requirements. Such changes will help affordable housing providers and investors build in communities with a need for safe and affordable housing. Building new affordable housing is already a challenge in today’s market, but all new construction can free up existing affordable housing as those owners “move up” in the market.

Maryland is currently estimated to have a housing undersupply of over 80,000 units which includes both for sale and residential rental property. Moreover, according to the “Maryland Housing Needs Assessment and 10-Year Strategic Plan (Needs Assessment),” Maryland will be adding 178,000 new households between 2020 and 2030. This same report shows that half of these new homes will be low income. It is important that need not be undermined by legislation like this which can slow permitting and even deny important housing developments through permits for roads, wastewater treatment, water appropriation, septic systems, etc.

For these reasons, we would request an unfavorable report.

For more information, contact

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