

February 22, 2022

Hon. Delegate Kumar Barve  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates

Position: **Favorable** report for House Bill 927: Housing and Community Development – Affordable Housing – Listing and Disposal of Excess Real Property

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading non-profit organization in the D.C. region, including suburban Maryland, advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

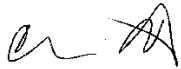
We wish to express our support for HB 927, which will require the Department of Planning to provide a list of excess real property owned by the State to the Department of Housing and Community Development. This list will indicate properties that are suitable for affordable housing development, and requires the state to make these sites available.

This bill is needed because many properties acquired by the state over the years for one reason or another may be languishing, with no planned public use. Without the impetus of this bill, we will not be able to take stock of such properties and move them into productive use. With this bill, the state can free up underutilized land that can be used to provide decent homes to Marylanders who find housing costs out of reach. We also commend the provision that this focuses on properties inside Priority Funding Areas that are suitable for redevelopment or new construction of affordable housing

We suggest, however, including more detailed guidance around determining suitability to ensure that state-owned parcels that might be planned for another public use are appropriately reserved, while still advancing other parcels to the list that allow them to be put into productive use as affordable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort  
Policy Director