

# **Consumer Council Crossover Support for HB 844 (COC**

Uploaded by: Armstead Jones

Position: FAV

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**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**CONSUMER COUNCIL**

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March 28, 2023

**To:** The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**From:** Monica Best-James, Chair  
Consumer Council of Maryland

**Re:** House Bill 844 – Housing and Community Development - Common Ownership  
Community Website (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Council of Maryland supports House Bill 844, sponsored by Delegates Pasteur and Holmes, which would require the Department of Housing and Community Development to establish and maintain a website that provides information on the rights and responsibilities of individuals living in common ownership communities (COCs). The Consumer Council is an advisory body to the Consumer Protection Division in the Office of the Attorney General with members representing businesses, consumers and the public who are appointed by the Governor.

A growing number of the homes bought and sold in Maryland are located in COCs, as residents strive to find affordable housing for their families. Despite this fact, there is insufficient information provided by the State of Maryland regarding COCs. Currently, the state lacks a user-friendly source of information regarding the rights and responsibilities of living in such communities.

In 2006, the Task Force on Common Ownership Communities finalized the report on its efforts to study various concerns related to COCs, including the need for education and training of community boards of current and prospective homeowners, dispute resolution services, and the provisions of the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act of 1994. In the report, the Task Force members defined their objectives to include the following: a) define the key issues which impact the health and viability of common ownership communities; b) analyze six areas of significant problems; and c) build consensus regarding balanced and affordable reforms for recommendation. The report was finalized with the assistance of staff provided by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

In its 2006 Final Report, one of the recommendations from the Task Force was that the state sponsor and approve a website regarding the rights and responsibilities of living in COCs. It was also suggested that the website could be hosted by an appropriate State agency. Further, that it should contain, among other items,

information on the “best practices” in common ownership community boards and provide hyperlinks to relevant and informative websites.

House Bill 844 reflects the recommendation regarding the creation of a website proposed by the Task Force on Common Ownership Communities in the Final Report. Further, this legislation is introduced at the request of, and is supported by, the Consumer Council of Maryland.

For the reasons articulated above, we **respectfully** request that the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee return a **Favorable Report** on this legislation.

Cc: The Honorable Cheryl E. Pasteur  
The Honorable Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.  
Members, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**HB 844 - COC Website - FAV - REALTORS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christa McGee

Position: FAV



**House Bill 844 – Housing and Community Development - Common Ownership  
Community Website**

**Position: Support with Amendment**

Maryland REALTORS® support HB 844, which would establish a website for information on Common Interest Communities (COC) in the state.

Estimates of Maryland homeowners living in Common Ownership Communities (CoC) are as high as 1,000,000. Yet, even in 2023, it can be difficult to identify whether a property is in an active COC, whether they are self-managed or employ a professional community management company, or how to contact that association for assistance. This creates issues not just for homeowners but also for potential purchasers of COC properties and the real estate professionals who represent them.

To make this website even more useful to those groups we propose additional items for inclusion on the website:

- For associations that are professionally managed, a link to the management company website, which in some cases serves as the only website for the COC; and,
- For associations without websites, a phone number or other contact method where inquiries are directed.

We also believe that there should be some reasonable timeframes imposed on COCs for updating information on the website. For instance, this could include when the contact information for the association changes or when the COC changes their management company or management status.

With the above recommendations, the REALTORS® recommend a favorable report.

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# **HB 844 - COC Website - FAV - REALTORS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa May

Position: FWA



**House Bill 844** – Housing and Community Development - Common Ownership Community Website

**Position: Support with Amendment**

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