

# **CDN HB852 FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Claudia Wilson Randall

Position: FAV



**Testimony HB 852**  
**House Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**February 28, 2023**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 180 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 852 – ensures that any affordable housing project with a house of worship as a partner would be eligible for the same expedited process review as any other eligible project.

Because projects on property held by a house of worship are subject to the same costs of development, the same challenges of review and standards as other projects, CDN expects that religious organizations will meet or exceed the same affordability standards as their peers in expedited review processes.

According to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment that was completed in 2021 by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, Maryland will have to make a significant investment in housing over the next 10 years in order to keep up with economic and demographic shifts in the state. The analysis showed that the state is short 85,000 rental units for low-income households. With Maryland expected to add an estimated 97,166 low-income households by 2030, the shortage will worsen unless the state creates and preserves many more affordable homes. Thirteen of the state's 23 counties and Baltimore City don't have enough housing that's affordable to very low-income renters. The deficit is largest in Montgomery County, followed by Baltimore.

At a time when communities throughout the state need quality, affordable housing at historic levels, more religious organizations with land are considering leveraging their properties as a way to help meet their mission and support community members in this way. Having equal access to any considerations at the local jurisdiction level, such as an expedited review process, affords more resources that can be invested back into the project itself, and supports bringing needed affordable housing homes to a community as quickly as possible.

We ask your favorable report for HB 852.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director

## **HB 852 Testimony - Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayle**

Uploaded by: Laurie-Anne Sayles

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

**COUNCILMEMBER LAURIE-ANNE SAYLES**

**AT LARGE**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

February 24, 2023

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing to support **HB 852 - Land Use - Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing - Application to Religious Organizations**. As a mother that benefited from MPDUs while continuing my education, I know the strain that housing costs put on low-income residents and the opportunities that affordable housing creates. I am grateful for the MPDU program for providing me the opportunity to live in a safe neighborhood with a good school for my daughter, and we must expand this program so that others can access the same opportunities afforded to me.

According to Montgomery County Planning Housing Needs Assessment, about half of the households in Montgomery County earn less than \$50,000 a year. The homeownership rate has decreased since 2010, particularly with lower-income homeowners. Planning estimates that over 50% of new housing in Montgomery County over the next 20 years will be multifamily rental units. While we are making progress in Montgomery County, one of our most pressing issues among residents and prospective employees is the rising cost of housing.

Montgomery County is in dire need of expanding affordable housing developments. This bill creatively addresses the housing shortage by expediting the developmental review process for affordable housing developments to include bonafide religious organizations. Further, this bill requires these organizations to reserve at least 50% of the dwelling units in the proposed affordable housing development for individuals whose household income is less than or equal to 80% of the area median income. Black and brown residents are falling behind homeowners significantly, and HB 852 is one of the many ways we can work towards closing that gap.

Thank you for your leadership and partnership. I urge a favorable opinion on HB 852.

STELLA B. WERNER COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING • ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

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# **HB 852 - Expedited Review - FAV - REALTORS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa May

Position: FAV



**House Bill 852 – Land Use - Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing  
- Application to Religious Organizations**

**Position: Support**

Maryland REALTORS® supports efforts to increase the supply of housing options in Maryland through legislation like HB 852. This requires that when a local government offers expedited zoning reviews for affordable housing, that religious organization applications be included in that process.

Maryland currently faces a shortage of nearly 120,000 housing units and growing. This shortage now impacts not just low-income residents, but also those of moderate incomes, young professionals, seniors, and working families. It encompasses not only what has been traditionally considered as “affordable housing” but also “missing middle” housing types.

Religious organizations often have sizable real estate holdings which could accommodate housing for its congregation or the broader community that they serve. It may also be a financial necessity for certain congregations to look at additional uses for that land, as congregation sizes and contributions have dwindled during and following the pandemic. This bill would clear some of the current obstacles which stand in the way of full or partial conversion of religious properties to accommodate housing.

There is no single answer to this housing shortage. Rather, it will take many modest actions that when taken together begin to make a difference. Maryland officials at both the state and local levels will need to work closely with one another and seek new ways of providing the housing that our residents need. The status quo is no longer an option.

Maryland REALTORS® applaud efforts to ease our housing crisis and reduce our current 120,000-unit housing shortage. We ask for your support of House Bill 852.

**For more information contact  
[lisa.may@mdrealtor.org](mailto:lisa.may@mdrealtor.org) or [christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org](mailto:christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org)**

## **MBIA Letter of Support HB 852.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: FAV

February 28, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Environment & Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251,  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD, 21401

**RE: MBIA Letter of Support HB 852 Land Use – Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing – Application to Religious Organizations**

Dear Chairman Barve:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **HB 852 Land Use – Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing – Application to Religious Organizations**. MBIA Supports the Act in its current version.

This bill would require that a county expedites affordable housing review processes and consider application exemptions for religious organizations. MBIA supports this measure. Maryland currently faces a housing shortage of approximately 120,000 housing units over the next decade. The national Association of Homebuilders reports that the estimated rent of a Maryland Housing Units is more than 30% of household incomes state wide with 25% of people spending more than 50% of their income on housing. In order to address this problem we need a concerted effort to make housing available, and affordable to the residents of this state. This bill is an important first step in addressing this problem as it relieves some of the process burden for construction these desperately needed housing units. More than 50% of residents of the state of Maryland report that lack of housing availability is a major problem. MBIA supports any effort to create more housing units without the long and expensive regulator burden often imposed by individual jurisdictions.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee 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](mailto:lgraf@marylandbuilders.org).

cc: Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee



# **Kronser Testimony Support HB 852.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lori Kronser

Position: FAV

To the Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am a resident of District 23, a member of Anne Arundel Connecting Together working in conjunction with Action in Montgomery, and the Mission Elder at Ark and Dove Presbyterian Church in Odenton. I am asking you to support [House Bill 852](#), Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing - Applications to Religious Organizations.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in innumerable issues for families across our state, including extreme rent increases, a lack of affordable housing, and an increase in homelessness. In short, **we are in the midst of a housing crisis**. We recognize that religious organizations are on the front line of this crisis, helping their communities and responding to the needs of their members. Some religious organizations are even thinking about building affordable housing on their property. HB 852 would give those organizations a helping hand; it would instruct county and local governments to **include such projects in any of their expedited review processes**. Passing this bill not only adds to the affordable housing stock but provides an opportunity for religious organizations to leverage land use to strengthen communities in their respective county.

Thank you for your time and attention,  
Lori Kronser  
12800 Holiday Lane,  
Bowie, MD 20716

## **HB852 FAV PresMD.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nicholas Redding

Position: FAV



# PRESERVATION MARYLAND

February 21, 2023

Hon. Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, 6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland

**RE: HB852 FAVORABLE**

**Chairperson Barve,**

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB852**— a piece of legislation that has the opportunity to support and invest in our state's history and communities.

Preservation Maryland is the statewide voice for historic preservation that works to protect the best of Maryland. Since 1931, we have worked tirelessly to protect the places, stories, and communities in Maryland that matter. (Learn more at: [presmd.org](http://presmd.org))

Preservation Maryland is supportive of the bill which has the potential to positively impact historic congregations and address the critical need for affordable housing across the state. Providing sustainable revenue streams for historic congregations is critical to the future of preserving these sacred places. This legislation does that while addressing the state's dire need for affordable housing. Which is a priority to the preservation and smart growth community, where infill and use of underutilized urban spaces (parking lots, etc.) are viewed as a way to holistically address the issue.

HB852 is an innovative way of providing revenue streams to historic congregations and addressing the state's dire need for affordable housing. Therefore, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB852.

**Favorable**

Sincerely,

Nicholas A. Redding, President & CEO

# **HB 852 FAV Del Stewart.pdf**

Uploaded by: Vaughn Stewart

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB852**  
**Land Use - Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing - Application to**  
**Religious Organizations**

Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart

February 28th, 2023 | Environment & Transportation Committee

**What the Bill Does**

HB852 requires counties with some type of fast track process for zoning decisions to include houses of worship building affordable housing on their land in that expedited review. These applications are still subject to the same standards of review and approval as all other under projects in the existing expedited review process. A project qualifies for expedited review if the development is on property owned by a religious organization and reserves at least 50% of the units for individuals whose household income is less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Currently, nine of the 23 counties have some form of expedited development review. Although the details of the process vary by county, the intention of this bill remains the same across the state. Zoning changes, development proposals, and project approvals can take months, if not years. With the pressing need for affordable housing in the state, this bill simply helps religious organizations move through a long, complicated process a little quicker.

However, this bill also respects the ability of counties to determine their own zoning policies. If a county believes religious organizations should not be able to utilize their existing expedited review process, counties are able to opt out of the provisions of this bill until June 30th, 2024.

**Why the Bill is Important**

A quarter of Maryland households are low-income, nearly all of which are housing cost-burdened. Even 15% of middle-income Marylanders are housing cost-burdened. According to the

National Low Income Housing Coalition, Maryland is lacking over 125,000 units for low-income renters, a number expected to increase over the next ten years. Affordable housing allows families to plan for their futures and create stability. When Marylanders from all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to a safe, stable, and affordable home, they are less likely to face the hardships of illness or food insecurity.

Houses of worship can be ideal locations for affordable housing. Their buildings are often located near jobs, transit, and other amenities. Declines in religious attendance has meant that many houses of worship have excess space and excess parking spots that could be used to build affordable housing.

Many houses of worship across the state have already partnered with developers to build affordable housing units on their land. But many more have decided not to pursue this option because of the costs associated with the lengthy zoning process. By developing affordable housing on land that they own, houses of worship can provide financial stability for their neighbors, a goal consistent with their missions.

### **Why the Committee Should Vote Favorably**

By making it easier for houses of worship to navigate the zoning process, this bill represents one small step toward solving our state's housing shortage. **I urge a favorable report.**

# **VHI Testimony HB852 2 24 2023.pdf**

Uploaded by: Leila Finucane

Position: FWA





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Rockville, Maryland 20852

T (301) 493-6000  
F (301) 493-9788  
[victoryhousing.org](http://victoryhousing.org)

**With respect to House Bill 852  
Testimony to the House Environment and Transportation Committee:  
February 24, 2024**

Victory Housing provides affordable housing to low- and moderate-income independent seniors and families and assisted living for seniors. For over forty years, Victory Housing, inspired by Catholic social teachings and serving as the nonprofit housing development arm of the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, has pursued this mission. Currently, we have over 2800 units in our portfolio across Washington, DC and Montgomery, Prince Georges, Charles, St. Mary's counties in Maryland. At Victory Housing, we lead with compassion, are accountable for our work, respect everyone, excel in our results and sustain our mission.

One of the significant problems facing Maryland is the lack of safe, affordable housing for vulnerable populations. It reaches into every community in our State, causing untold individual suffering and social ills. In our efforts to provide affordable housing for seniors and families and assisted living for seniors, we have developed affordable and mixed-income communities on land made available by the Catholic Archdiocese, land won through competitive processes with government entities and land purchased privately. We welcome legislative efforts that seek to expand the development of affordable housing in our communities. We are favorable with that intent behind the amendments on HB 852.

The intent of this legislation seems to be aimed at encouraging counties to consider applications for the development of affordable housing from bona fide religious organizations under the expedited development review process. To achieve this goal, applications for development of affordable housing presented by or on behalf of religious organizations should qualify for expedited review if they meet the requirements that local law would impose on any other proposed development.

To fulfill the intent of the legislation we would respectfully ask that you consider the following amendments that we believe would remedy the bill and help it fulfill its stated intent:

1. On page 3, delete lines 17 -22 and replace with the following language: “shall meet the county's standards eligible for expedited review.” As written currently, counties that have expedited review processes for affordable housing might interpret the deleted language to mean that (1) they need to have a different approval process to enter expedited review for religious or religious affiliated organizations and/or (2) that religious or religious affiliated organizations can ONLY develop affordable housing on their own land.

~~(I) RESERVE AT LEAST 50% OF THE DWELLING UNITS IN THE PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHOSE HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS LESS THAN OR EQUAL TO 80% OF THE AREA MEDIAN INCOME; AND~~

~~(II) DEVELOP THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON PROPERTY OWNED BY THE ORGANIZATION.~~

2. Delete subsection (C). We believe this section is unconstitutional and no county should develop a policy that prohibits the consideration of applications from religious organizations. This subsection C) allows a county to bar expedited religious -backed developments if that county adopts, on or before June 30, 2024, a local law that bars religious-backed developments from expedited review. This provision affirming such religious discrimination if it did exist (we are not aware of any county adopting a local law prohibiting expedited review of applications based on the religious nature or affiliation of the applicant) would undermine the intent of the bill to promote rather than constrain development of affordable housing.

~~(2) ADOPTS A LOCAL LAW PROHIBITING THE CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS FROM RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS UNDER THE EXPEDITED DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.~~

Since subsection C is also referenced in the introductory phrase, we would also ask to delete the following language in the introductory phrase in (B)(1) “except as provided in subsection C of this section” and begin instead with the “on or after....”

Thank you for your work to increase affording housing development in Maryland, we ask you to issue a favorable report with amendments on HB 852.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Leila A. Finucane  
President & CEO

# **HB0852\_DavidBowers\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melissa Bondi

Position: FWA



**HB852 - Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing - Applications to Religious Organizations**

Testimony to the House Environment & Transportation Committee

**Position: Favorable with Amendments**

submitted via electronic transmission

February 21, 2023

To Chair Barve and all Members of the Committee:

I am writing today on behalf of Enterprise Community Partners (Enterprise) **to urge support for HB852** to ensure that faith-based development proposals including housing affordability be eligible for the same considerations as other providers in jurisdictions with expedited project review processes.

As a leading national and state provider of faith-based development expertise, training and technical assistance, development partnerships, financing, and peer-learning programs, Enterprise is also uniquely positioned to provide suggestions that may enhance the bill's tenets further, as outlined below for your consideration.

**About Enterprise:**

Founded 40 years ago here in Maryland, Enterprise is committed to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging, and platforms for resilience and upward mobility for all.

Our impact and investment in Maryland housing and affordability is one measure of our commitment to the state and its residents. Enterprise's affordable housing production, preservation, and rehabilitation efforts total more than \$1 billion in total portfolio value, including 76 apartment communities and more than 7,500 homes in Maryland. Our work is centered on holistic resident services and environmentally sustainable design, construction and operations.

In addition, we provide millions of dollars each year in loan financing, equity investments and grants to nonprofit and mission-minded community organizations, as well as technical assistance, partnerships, and a variety of federal, state, and local policy analysis.

Since 2006, our [Faith-Based Development Initiative](#) (FBDI) has leveraged \$2.2 million in grants, and \$154 million in total capital for faith-based development in and near Maryland. Participants in the initiative have created or preserved 1,500 homes.

Enterprise brings substantial first-hand experience with the vital role Maryland's houses of worship can continue to play in helping to achieve state and local goals for meeting housing affordability and other community needs. We support legislation like HB852 that ensures equitable treatment for faith-based proposals to be considered in local review processes, and to benefit as other projects would in

cases where expedited review is possible. We applaud Delegate Stewart and fellow committee members Long, Holmes, and Ruth as co-sponsors for proposing this legislation, and express appreciation for all housing affordability champions on the committee.

#### **Benefits of HB0852:**

As submitted, the bill would ensure that any affordable housing project with a house of worship as a partner would be eligible for the same expedited process review as any other eligible project. This is important because any redevelopment project on property held by a house of worship will be subject to the same costs of development, the same challenges and standards as other projects. The internal house of worship's review and decision to submit a proposal as well as public review is always rigorous and involves substantial time and energy.

At a time when Maryland communities need quality, affordable housing at historic levels, more religious organizations with land holdings are considering leveraging their properties as a way to help meet their mission and support community members in this way. Having equal access to any considerations at the local jurisdiction level, such as an expedited review process, affords more resources that can be invested back into the project itself, and supports bringing needed affordable housing homes to a community as quickly as possible.

The bill also identifies what entities will qualify for this consideration. Creating a definition for a "bona fide" religious organization helps to reassure all Marylanders of the good-faith intentions and legitimate considerations of those projects that would seek such designation as a religious organization.

#### **Additional considerations on HB852:**

One observation with the language in the current bill relates to Section 7-105(B)(2)(I) (page 3, lines 17-20 of the published bill.) That language states:

15                               **(2) IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR THE EXPEDITED DEVELOPMENT**  
16   **REVIEW PROCESS, THE BONA FIDE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION SHALL:**

17                               **(I) RESERVE AT LEAST 50% OF THE DWELLING UNITS IN THE**  
18   **PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHOSE**  
19   **HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS LESS THAN OR EQUAL TO 80% OF THE AREA MEDIAN**  
20   **INCOME; AND**

21                               **(II) DEVELOP THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON**  
22   **PROPERTY OWNED BY THE ORGANIZATION.**

It is our experience that many religious organizations participating in our faith-based development initiative always meet and frequently exceed the housing affordability requirements within a local jurisdiction's published standard.

The requirements in the subsection (I) here seem to prescribe a specific minimum threshold for both percentage of units and income levels for projects involving religious organizations. Without knowing what requirements may be imposed on non-house of worship projects in localities with expedited review processes, we wonder if it is necessary to prescribe the religious organization project specifications in state law? Does this clause promote the same equitable consideration as the other excellent tenets of the bill, which offer true parity for religious organization-involved housing projects?

**We suggest amending the legislation to provide more flexibility to religious organizations so they can meet or exceed the same affordability standards as their peers in expedited review processes.**

Our team would be happy to answer any questions you may have about our work in Maryland, and we appreciate your consideration of these views. On behalf of Enterprise Community Partners, we urge you to support HB852 as discussed herein.

Respectfully submitted:



Rev. David C. Bowers  
Vice President and Mid-Atlantic Market Leader  
Enterprise Community Partners

Cc: Melissa Bondi, Mid-Atlantic State & Local Policy Director  
Rev. Joseph K Williams, Senior Program Director