



**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.

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