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**To:** Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**From:** MLTA Legislative Committee  
**Date:** March 20, 2023  
**Subject:** **Senate Bill 971** - Real Property - Recordation - Procedures  
**Position:** **Support**

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The Maryland Land Title Association (MLTA) **supports Senate Bill 971** – Real Property – Recordation – Procedures.

The bill requires a county through its designated to provide, upon request, a certificate enumerating what taxes, assessments, and charges are due against a property. The bill would further require a county employee presented with a certificate to endorse a deed and establishes that the endorsement is sufficient authority for a transfer on the assessment books. A bona fide purchaser for value of real property in the county would be entitled to rely on the certificate to establish any tax or assessment due to the county.

MLTA support this bill because such certificates would speed the recording process, and provide greater certainty to parties in a real estate settlement. Currently, it is not uncommon for parties, generally through a settlement agent, to contact those jurisdictions that do not offer “lien certificates” to find out what charges are due to the county, only get to recordation and find that the county has changed the charges or forgotten to add something, and recordation will be refused until those sums are paid. The settlement agent then needs to either come out of pocket to pay the costs or return to the parties to seek extra funds. This bill would require counties presented with a certificate to record the deed as long as all charges identified by the county on the certificate are paid. This provides greater certainty to all parties involved in the transaction.

The members of the Maryland Land Title Association urge a favorable report on SB 971 in its current form.