



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SUPPORT TESTIMONY

**HB 491 - State Department of Assessments and Taxation and Department of General Services -
Property Appraisal Aids - Geographic Images**

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
Maryland Senate
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Esteemed Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

House Bill 491 is aimed at modernizing, enhancing, and standardizing the property assessment process within our state. This bill integrates geographic and photographic imagery for the State Department of Assessments and Taxation, the Department of General Services, and Maryland residents.

Improved Accuracy and Efficiency in Assessments: The integration of geographic and photographic imagery, as proposed in House Bill 491, represents a logical step forward in our property assessment processes. Already implemented by some counties in Maryland, these technological upgrades will increase SDAT's responsiveness and effectiveness.

Addressing Staffing and Resource Challenges: The State Department of Assessments and Taxation continually faces challenges in maintaining large staff sizes to guarantee that more than two million real properties are assessed once every three years. Regardless of the hiring challenges the Department faces, using advanced appraisal aids reduces the time and physical labor required for assessments, allowing our skilled assessors to focus on more complex valuation tasks and improving overall staff efficiency and morale.

Utilizing Oblique Aerial Photography: The use of oblique aerial photography is an innovative approach that allows for accurate measurements of buildings and properties without physical access, which is often time-consuming and sometimes not feasible. Using this technology speeds up the assessment process and respects our citizens' privacy and property rights, as it minimizes the need for assessors to enter private property.

Building From Our Success: Many counties have already used oblique aerial photography for property tracking and assessment. The major change is that the State will partner directly with each County for oblique aerial photography. The counties that have already implemented this program have led to substantial increases in the efficiency and efficacy of property assessments.

Maintenance of Imagery and Appraisal Aids: The bill mandates that the State Department of Assessments and Taxation prepare, install, and maintain a statewide and local geographic images database. This database will be an invaluable resource for our assessors and residents.

In conclusion, House Bill 491 is necessary to modernize our property assessment processes. Our assessors are given the tools they need to perform their duties more effectively while addressing operational challenges and staffing issues.

For these reasons, I urge your support for House Bill 491 and respectfully request a favorable report.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kris Fair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Delegate Kris Fair
District 3, Frederick County