



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB484
Land Use – Affordable Housing – Zoning Density and Permitting (Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024)

Senate - Education, Energy, and Environment

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

March 1st, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Fedlam and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of SB484**. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 120,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families in the state.

SB484 is important legislation that will encourage the development of affordable housing and shift transportation demand towards public transit and rail stations. By setting a strong definition of affordable, “not exceeding 30% of household income”, the Housing Expansion and Affordability Act takes into account the financial burden that rent can have on workers with lower wages. Affordable dwellings are also defined as 60% or less of the median income of the area, which allows the required price points to fit more accurately in poorer areas in the state.

Within this plan, there are qualified projects that are allowed to exceed density limits. Among them include housing - which also has an affordability requirement - built or redeveloped near rail stations. When people choose public transportation, they are reducing total vehicle miles traveled. If housing can grow near transit centers, then it will be easier for people to drive less or not even need a vehicle. This pushes us closer to emissions reductions goals and alleviates the local pollution burden in communities adjacent to heavy traffic.

As Maryland continues to grow, it is critical affordable housing options do as well. Low-income renters deserve a place in Maryland’s new housing and redeveloped stock. For this reason, CASA urges a favorable report.

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