

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chairman, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB484 Land Use – Affordable Housing – Zoning Density and Permitting (Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024)

Dear Chairman Feldman,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB484 Land Use – Affordable Housing – Zoning Density and Permitting (Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024)**. MBIA supports this measure.

Maryland currently faces a housing shortage of approximately 96,000 housing units. If nothing changes, that number will increase by 5,600 units per year. The National Association of Homebuilders reports that the estimated rent of a Maryland Housing Unit 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 presents a comprehensive approach to addressing the housing shortage by modernizing local land use laws and streamlining approval processes for transit-oriented development. These measures are crucial in creating new opportunities for our members to construct much-needed housing units that meet the needs of all Marylanders. By incentivizing the construction of targeted new housing, the bill creates pathways for individuals and families to secure safe and affordable homes in areas with access to essential services and transportation.

Another key component of this bill is its provision to allow development on former state-owned complexes. By leveraging underutilized land resources and promoting partnerships with nonprofit organizations, this bill creates a conducive environment for builders to undertake innovative projects that meet the growing demand for all types of housing.

MBIA is also in support of this bill's emphasis on increasing density under certain conditions. We believe it is essential for optimizing land use and promoting sustainable growth. By encouraging denser development in appropriate locations, HB 538 ensures that builders can maximize the use of available land while preserving the character and charm of our communities. This balanced approach is critical in accommodating population growth and housing demand without compromising the quality of life that residents' value.

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.

cc: Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee