

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
2 West, Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 484 – Affordable Housing – Zoning Density and Permitting (Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024)

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 484 as an opportunity to address crucial issues related to affordable housing and zoning regulations, which are significant to the State's communities and residents.

Senate Bill 484 prevents local jurisdictions from utilizing elements of public facilities laws to impede the development of certain State-funded affordable housing projects or other qualified projects, or to unnecessarily restrict or limit their progress. Ensuring access to affordable housing is essential for fostering inclusive and sustainable communities.

Senate Bill 484 will support greater transit ridership by enabling increased housing and other land uses near rail stations. This complements and amplifies our on-going State and local transit-oriented development (TOD) efforts, where in concert with local communities, we are working to make transit more convenient, accessible, and attractive to residents and commuters, and thus increasing their likelihood of using the service. With more riders using the system, Senate Bill 484 has the ability to expand employment opportunities and drive economic growth. Additionally, increasing transit ridership is essential to addressing the climate crisis by reducing carbon emissions, and promoting safer and healthier streets for our entire region.

By supporting Senate Bill 484, MDOT recognizes the importance of removing barriers to affordable housing development and advancing equitable housing policies throughout Maryland. This legislation aligns with MDOT's commitment to promoting accessible transportation options and enhancing quality of life for all Maryland residents.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 484 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
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