



## Testimony to the Environment and Transportation Committee

### HB003 - Land Use - Expedited Development Review Processes for Affordable Housing - Requirements

Position: Favorable

1/26/2024

The Honorable Delegate Korman, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Korman and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Zoe Gallagher and I am a Policy Associate at Economic Action Maryland. Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

As representative of an organization that works closely with fair and affordable housing at both the policy and ground level, I am writing to ask for your favorable support for HB003, which expedites development review processes for affordable housing developments.

Maryland is desperately behind on the development of affordable housing units, especially those for families with extremely low household incomes. In Maryland, [27%](#) of renter households are classified as extremely low-income, meaning they make 30% or less of the area median income. Of these extremely low-income households that rent, [75%](#) are severely cost-burdened, paying over 50% of their income on housing costs. Based on data from our tenant advocacy program for landlord-tenant disputes, over half of those who filed an intake form in Baltimore City paid more than 30% of their income on rent.

Our state must prioritize the development of safe and effective affordable housing as the cost of living continues to soar. This is why I urge you to support HB003.

There are several reasons why construction of affordable housing takes more than [double the time](#) it takes to develop a private apartment complex. However, one great contributing factor to this extended timeline is the lengthy review processes of local governments, which can include the application review process, zoning permitting, and planning review.

As our state works to tackle the challenge of a 96,000 unit shortage for affordable housing, this session is crucial for enacting legislation that incentivizes expeditious affordable housing development. Every Marylander deserves to live in a safe home that they can afford to live in. Thus, I urge a favorable report on HB13.

Sincerely,  
Zoe Gallagher, Policy Associate