



**Testimony HB 538**  
**House Environmental and Transportation Committee**  
**February, 20, 2024**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 538 - a local legislative body from prohibiting the placement of certain manufactured homes in a zoning district that allows single-family residential uses under certain circumstances; prohibiting a local jurisdiction from using an element of an adequate public facilities law to deny a certain permit for a State-funded affordable housing project or to restrict or limit the development of the project in certain manners; requiring local jurisdictions to allow an increase in density of certain qualified projects in certain districts or zones for certain properties formerly owned by the State, located within a certain distance of a rail station, or owned or controlled by a nonprofit organization; providing for the calculation of residential density in certain zoning districts; prohibiting the application of certain zoning requirements under certain circumstances.

In 2020, the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners released the [Maryland Housing Needs Assessment and 10 Year Strategic Plan](#). The report was commissioned in response to a request from the chairs of the Maryland General Assembly's Senate Budget and Taxation and House Appropriations committees.

At that time the findings included:

- A shortage of 85,000 affordable apartments for families and individuals earning less than 30% of median income, representing the most serious gap in supply for people at all income levels;
- An additional 97,200 families and individuals earning less than 50% of median income are expected to move to the state by 2030, highlighting the need to dramatically increase affordable housing supply over the next 10 years; and

- Seniors, people with disabilities and people of color face significant hurdles to stable housing, such as inflexible standards used by landlords when screening tenants and high down payments.
- These disparities have been made worse by the pandemic; Today, a variety of factors have set the stage for unprecedented challenges for Maryland renters, most pressing are incomes that have not kept pace with housing cost increases . Renters across Maryland have seen the average rents far outpace inflation and sharp increases of all goods and services.

Housing is at the root of unleashing the economy for Marylanders. Housing challenges are the top of every business owner's list of challenges today. Housing impacts every regions' ability to attract and retain labor and build competitive schools. Further, poor housing threatens the health and resilience of Maryland families.

This legislation can help to accelerate the speed of development throughout the state and work to address the current need for more than 100,000 units of housing. Members of the General Assembly need to ensure that new development not only serves high-income suburbs but also homes for veterans, people with disabilities, people of color as well as the ever- increasing numbers of older adults who will live well past 80 years of age. All groups will need services and will need care.

We urge your favorable report for HB 538.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director