



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Christiana Rigby
Councilmember

District 3

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0538

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

February 20, 2024

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environmental and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee. I am writing to express my strong support for the thoughtful, targeted, and balanced proposal that is HB0538, legislation that offers density bonuses for certain types of development.

As the Howard County Councilmember representing both transit-oriented development zoning districts in the County, I firmly believe this legislation will reduce the barriers developers face and encourage additional homes and housing affordability in these zones.

Maryland is short 96,000 housing units, a number that is only projected to increase. Our residents feel the impact of Maryland's housing shortage as 52 percent of renters are cost-burdened. Prospective homeowners face similar challenges as Marylanders need an income of \$132,000 to afford a median-priced home. This increased by 56 percent from October 2021 to October 2022.

Currently, there are many mechanisms in place to restrict housing development and not enough options to incentivize development. By expanding opportunities for density bonuses, limiting the impact of Adequate Public Facility Ordinances, and permitting new manufactured homes in single-family residential zones, local jurisdictions have access to new tools that increase housing affordability and housing supply. These are solutions aimed at addressing a significant root cause of Maryland's housing shortage and increased housing costs.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation, and I respectfully encourage a favorable report.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christiana Rigby".

Christiana Rigby