



**MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE**

**January 30, 2024**

**HB 7**

**Housing Innovation Pilot Program & Housing Innovation Fund – Establishment (Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act 2024)**

**House Environment & Transportation Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 7. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 7 aims to establish the Housing Innovation Pilot Program within the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The MCC believes in the importance of creating compassionate and innovative solutions to address the pressing issue of affordable housing. Catholic teaching supports the right to private property but recognizes that communities and government have an obligation to ensure that housing needs of all are met, especially the poor and vulnerable members of our communities. Access to safe and affordable housing is a fundamental human right and this legislation represents a positive step toward achieving this goal.

The establishment of the Housing Innovation Pilot Program, along with the creation of the Housing Innovation Fund, signifies a commitment to finding creative and sustainable solutions for housing needs. By providing funds for mixed-income, cross-subsidized housing, the program acknowledges the diversity within our communities and the importance of fostering spaces where people of various economic backgrounds can live together and have the opportunity to thrive.

The requirement for local housing authority to provide a dollar-for-dollar match for Program funds awarded to housing innovation projects demonstrates a collaborative approach to addressing housing challenges. This partnership between the state and local authorities reflects the values of community, shared responsibility, and solidarity that are integral to our faith.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 7.