



Testimony before the Maryland House of Delegates Ways and Means Committee

Regarding Renters' Property Tax Relief and Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Programs -
Gross Income and Assessed Value Limitations - Alterations

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Good afternoon chair and members of the committee:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to participate at today's hearing.

My name is Sheila Somashekhar, and I am speaking on behalf of the Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC), a collaborative working on equitable development along the Purple Line. With its home at the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth, PLCC has developed a number of research-supported plans and policy priorities that address issues such as housing stability and affordability in gentrifying communities along the transit route.

PLCC has a stated goal in its [2023-2027 Housing Action Plan](#) to make sure renters and homeowners have the choice to continue to live near the Purple Line. About one-quarter of Purple Line homeowners already struggle to keep up with the costs associated with homeownership, with the burden being even greater for homeowners of color. We support HB0044, as necessary for homeownership preservation and prevention of displacement.

The maximum home values and tax credit income thresholds set 15 years ago are outdated for our region. As of 2022, half the Corridor's zip codes had median home prices at or above \$450k. Further, a household income of \$72,000 falls well below 60% of area median income along the Purple Line. Increasing the household gross income limit and the allowable maximum value of dwellings that qualify for the program means that more struggling families will have access to the relief available from the tax credit.

Passing this legislation is important for the wellbeing of the communities along the Purple Line, and we encourage your support. Thank you, and please contact me at ssomashe@umd.edu if you wish to discuss further.