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TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN  
SB 944 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PERMITS – LOCAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS  
(MARYLAND HOUSING DATA TRANSPARENCY ACT)

Maryland is facing a housing crisis. A recent survey found that **42%** of young renters are considering moving out of our state due to the high cost of living—particularly the cost of housing. These high costs can be explained by supply and demand: more and more people are moving to Maryland, but the state is experiencing a shortfall of **96,000** housing units. Put simply, with low supplies, costs are high.

Thankfully, our state is making significant strides toward increasing housing supply and lowering costs. Last year, Governor Moore signed the Housing Expansion and Affordability Act (HB 538) into law. Importantly, the act modified local zoning laws and continues to incentivize affordable housing development where it is most needed. Yet, as we expand affordable housing across the state, we must also ensure that housing development data is not only collected, but also accessible by developers, policymakers, and the public.

Senate Bill 944 fills this critical gap in our housing development efforts. The bill requires that local housing authorities submit monthly reports to the Maryland Department of Planning on residential building permits that the authorities granted the previous month. These reports would include, among other things, the use and occupancy date, tax identification, type of permit, type of residence, total number of permitted units, and total cost of construction. These reports would be available on an interactive and searchable website.

Transparent and accessible data could help public and private actors identify areas where affordable housing development is still lagging, or where certain housing types are underrepresented. Indeed, with nearly real-time data, policymakers and developers could establish targeted policies and projects addressing housing shortages. Likewise, advocacy groups and Maryland residents could track where private companies are influencing housing access, and use the data to support or challenge proposed developments at public meetings.

In short, information is empowering, and Senate Bill 944 empowers **everyone** to participate in housing development discussions and work toward equitable solutions. I therefore ask for your support of SB 944. Thank you for your consideration.