

CDN SB 944 FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Claudia Wilson Randall

Position: FAV



Testimony SB 944
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 25, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE

Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment 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.

SB 944 – Requiring local jurisdictions to make monthly reports to the Department of Planning regarding housing development permits issued by the local jurisdiction relating to housing development permits.

Ensuring that all families live in affordable, stable homes will improve community health outcomes, thereby reducing health care and education costs. Housing is an urgent priority for economic growth. Building a firm foundation for stable homes begins with policies that increase the production of housing affordable to households making less than \$65,000 per year. Given the health, educational, and cost implications of families living in unstable homes, there is an urgent need to increase supply of affordable homes throughout the state.

Opposition to affordable housing tends to relate to increased traffic; additional school costs; increased demands on other municipal services, such as fire and police; stresses on water and sewer systems; concerns about developer quality or experience; decreases in property values; various types of environmental degradation; and, perhaps least tangible of all, adverse changes in the character of the town. These claims may often mask underlying biases and racist attitudes.

Contrary to common assumptions, several studies have consistently found that, if affordable housing is well designed, fits in with the surrounding neighborhood, and is well managed, there appear to be no negative impacts of that housing on the property values of neighboring houses. Other studies have shown that population growth associated with new affordable housing does not necessarily yield higher municipal costs, and there is actually less increase in school costs related to the construction of multifamily developments than there is with new single-family

houses. However, there have been few, if any, studies comparing the specific controversies that surface prior to a development with the outcomes of the developments in question.

SB 944 respects the autonomy of Maryland's counties, empowering local governments to openly be transparent about housing permitting. This bill holds jurisdictions accountable for the decisions that they make. Our members need streamlined zoning and permitting processes.

We urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 944.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director

SB 944 - Housing Reporting - FAV - REALTORS.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa May

Position: FAV



**Senate Bill 944 – Housing Development Permits - Local Reporting Requirements
(Maryland Housing Data Transparency Act)**

Position: Support

Maryland currently faces a shortage of nearly 150,000 housing units and growing. Comprehensive and reliable sources of data on our state's housing production will be required to close that gap. For this reason, Maryland REALTORS® urges strong support for SB 944.

Maryland's housing needs are well documented. We have not built the housing needed to support our current and future workforce, which has resulted in growing percentages of residents who are looking to leave our state. This has impacts not just on those individuals, but also on our business community and the overall economic condition of Maryland.

This bill requires jurisdictions which issue 50 or more building permits to report the types and number of units permitting, including middle housing types. In addition to sending this information to the Department of Planning, this information will be made available to the public in a searchable format. Doing this will provide a more complete picture of housing production in the state and identify housing needs which still exist.

Maryland's housing shortage is a direct result of local governments not producing the units needed to serve their residents. SB 944 is a necessary measure to hold them accountable for reducing our unmet housing needs and addressing our housing crisis.

Maryland REALTORS® asks for your support for SB 944.

**For more information contact
lisa.may@mdrealtor.org or christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org**

MBIA Letter of Support SB 944.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: FAV

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chairman, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 944 Housing Development Permits – Local Reporting Requirements (Maryland Housing Data Transparency Act)

Dear Chairman Feldman:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB 944 Housing Development Permits – Local Reporting Requirements (Maryland Housing Data Transparency Act)**. MBIA Supports the Act in its current version.

This bill requires local jurisdictions to make monthly reports to the Department of Planning regarding housing development permits issued by the jurisdiction. Maryland currently faces a housing shortage of approximately 96,000 housing units. If nothing changes, that number will increase by 5600 units per year. The National Association of Homebuilders reports that the estimated rent of a Maryland Housing Units is more than 30% of household incomes state wide with 25% of people spending more than 50% of their income on housing. In order to address this problem, we need a concerted effort to make housing available and affordable to the residents of this state.

In order to solve the housing shortage, we need to come up with a comprehensive solution to a very complicated problem. By collecting more data regarding residential building or development permits, it will allow local jurisdictions to be more transparent and report information that the public deserves. The ultimate goal for the State of Maryland should be to establish housing targets and work with the counties to reach those goals for housing.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB944_Hettleman_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

SHELLY HETTLEMAN
Legislative District 11
Baltimore County

Chair, Rules Committee
Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees
Capital Budget
Health and Human Services
Chair, Pensions

Joint Committees
Senate Chair, Audit and Evaluation
Senate Chair, Pensions



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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.

SB 944 - MML - OPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Angelica Bailey Thupari

Position: UNF



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 25, 2025

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill: SB 944 - Housing Development Permits - Local Reporting Requirements (Maryland Housing Data Transparency Act)

Position: Oppose

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League (“MML”) respectfully opposes Senate Bill 944, which requires local governments that issue at least 50 building/development permits for new residential units every year to make monthly reports to the State on a laundry list of information. Municipalities favor transparency and are eager to be partners in solving the State’s housing crisis, but some of the requirements in this bill are confusing, burdensome, and/or logistically challenging.

This bill requires a local government to report significant information monthly for every residential building or development permit that was issued in the immediately preceding month. One of the data points required is the number and date of Use and Occupancy (“U&O”) permit issued. This assumes the U&O permit is issued the same month that the building/development permit was issued, which is grossly unrealistic. Local governments are also required to report the total cost of construction. Unless a local government is a party responsible for the development project, our members wouldn’t be privy to that information and therefore wouldn’t be able to comply with this requirement.

Not only are some of these data points difficult, if not impossible, to include, but the submission deadline is unreasonable. The monthly report is due to MDP on the first of the month for the immediately preceding month, meaning the report for January 2027 is due February 1, 2027. That only gives a municipality 1 day to finish collecting data and complete the report, which is unrealistic and may require the hardworking municipal employee responsible to work overtime if the 1st falls on a weekend or holiday.

Finally, local governments are required to publish these reports on their websites, but the bill is unclear regarding standards for those publications and whether local governments must make these reports searchable and interactive like MDP. Searchable and interactive websites and interfaces can be expensive to build and maintain, and our members are concerned that complying with this would dilute their already limited resources.

For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the Committee provide Senate Bill 944 with an unfavorable report. For more information, please contact Angelica Bailey Thupari, Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs, at angelicab@mdmunicipal.org or (443) 756-0071. Thank you for your consideration.

The Maryland Municipal League uses its collective voice to advocate, empower and protect the interests of our 160 local governments members and elevates local leadership, delivers impactful solutions for our communities, and builds an inclusive culture for the 2 million Marylanders we serve.

MDP SB 944 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Wilson

Position: INFO



Maryland DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

HEARING DATE: February 25th at 1:00 PM

BILL NO: SB 944

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

POSITION: Informational

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 721-6789

TITLE: Housing Development Permits - Local Reporting Requirements (Maryland Housing Data Transparency Act)

BILL ANALYSIS:

SB0944/HB1193 adds reporting requirements for counties and municipalities that issue more than 50 new residential building permits in a year, beyond those already required under §1–208(e) of the Land Use Article (LUA). This bill goes beyond the current mandated summary reporting to require jurisdictions to provide more detailed information on residential building permit activity monthly to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP). MDP is required to develop and post online an interactive dashboard of housing building permit data with an associated map capable of displaying queried information. MDP must also submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on building permit activity received from the participating jurisdictions.

Title 12, §12–505, of the Public Safety Article requires that each local jurisdiction shall enforce the current version of the Maryland Building Performance Standards. At a minimum, the local jurisdiction shall implement these standards by reviewing plans, issuing building permits, inspecting the work, and issuing use/occupancy certificates. How local jurisdictions fulfill this responsibility varies among counties and municipalities across the state due to local capacity limitations and commitment to the process.

MDP's [2020 survey of county and municipal building permit software systems](#) showed that most counties and larger municipalities are using third-party building permit software. There is a relatively limited number of software vendors supporting building permit tracking for Maryland jurisdictions. The top six software firms used by jurisdictions process 75% of all new housing permits on an annual basis in Maryland.

Each jurisdiction customizes their building permit software system to collect data related to their planning, zoning and building review processes. There are some common building permit data elements, but there is a wide variance in what information is collected locally and how it is coded into their system.

While building permit information is public record, local governments do not have statewide building permit data standards that would enable data compatibility among jurisdictions. MDP has been working for several years with about a dozen local governments that have voluntarily shared monthly building permit information for a pilot project to establish a statewide building permit data system, modeled after [Baltimore Metropolitan Councils' \(BMC\) Building Permit Data Dashboard](#). The pilot project confirmed MDP's approach of local permit data compilation achieved the same results as reported by BMC. Because this pilot project was not statutorily mandated and there were no reporting deadlines, the project moved forward gradually based on time availability of the two assigned MDP staff members.

Based on the *US Census Annual Report of New Housing Units Authorized for Construction by Building Permits*, there were 28 Maryland jurisdictions in 2023 and 33 jurisdictions in 2022 that issued permits for 50 or more new residential units. Depending on construction activity for each jurisdiction, the number of jurisdictions required to report under this bill may vary slightly from year to year. It is also likely some smaller jurisdictions might issue more than 50 new units one year and less than 50 permits for the next couple of years. To establish a consistent database of participating jurisdictions, if the bill passed, MDP would prioritize collecting building permit data from the top 30-40 jurisdictions issue permits over the past several years.

This bill relies on collaborating jurisdictions to collect and share the building permit data, since there is no enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance. Based on MDP's experience of local annual reporting compliance with §1-208 (LUA), some jurisdictions routinely file reports while others do not. Since the annual reporting requirement started in 2012, county submissions have ranged between 60-90% of all counties (with an average of 75% participation), and for municipalities the response rate has been between 31-73% of the 108 municipalities with planning and zoning authority (with an average 48%). To achieve the highest participation of building permit data collected, MDP will need to devote significant time coordinating with local governments and routinely checking in with them to ensure the data is submitted. Regarding the building permit data, while most jurisdictions have some form of data-sharing arrangement with the local State Department of Assessment & Taxation (SDAT) office, this shared data is usually a subset of all the data locally collected. Some jurisdictions have resisted modifying their data reports, beyond the SDAT data report, to export the entire building permit information they are collecting.

Ramping MDP's pilot building project up to collect building permit data from 30-40 jurisdictions monthly, to process that data into a common database, and to then report that information online will require at least one full time staff member devoted 100% to this mandate reporting requirement. MDP reported in its fiscal note for this bill that, at a minimum, one GIS Application Development Administrator will be needed to manage this new database for the department with an estimated cost in FY 26 of \$95,979. Without this additional staffing, it is unlikely that MDP will be able to achieve the desired results stipulated in the bill.

This bill has the potential of establishing a new statewide building permit data system (SBPDS) to inform state agencies and local governments where residential development is occurring, what is being built, the time required to construct projects and many more details. This information can improve infrastructure planning, enhance the effectiveness of state policies and programs, help identify best permitting practices of local governments, and target economic development efforts to mention just a few potential state benefits of a fully operational SBPDS. The SBPDS also would provide a downloadable data resource that could be independently analyzed by local governments, universities and the private sector to evaluate development approval processes, targeted market analyses, and host of other studies. The SBPDS would also enable local governments to analyze their own building permit data using an online monthly dashboard of summarized permit data. The dashboard would help fill a capacity gap for localities without technical resources to analyze their own building permit data. **However, without adequate staffing, the full potential of the SBPDS cannot be realized.**

MDP SB 944 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Charles Boyd

Position: INFO



Maryland DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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