

## **House Bill 503**

### **Land Use - Regional Housing Infrastructure Gap (Housing for Jobs Act) House Environment and Transportation Committee March 4, 2025**

#### **Position: SUPPORT**

House Bill 503 aims to address Maryland's housing shortage through identifying gaps in housing infrastructure in local jurisdictions and expediting approvals for new housing units in such areas. The bill also sets guidelines for local jurisdictions to deny housing projects that would have adverse impacts on their communities.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders is at risk of food insecurity. A person who is food insecure does not have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day, and this problem persists in every area of the state. There are also communities and populations that are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, including communities of color, families with children, and older adults. The drivers of food insecurity are complex and often include additional factors such as low income, lack of reliable transportation, and access to healthcare.

To end food insecurity in Maryland, the root causes of hunger, including housing instability, lack of adequate healthcare access in communities, and limited transportation options, must be addressed. These communities, like hunger, are not restricted by borders, and are found across the state – whether in urban, suburban, or rural areas. With around 2 million Marylanders forced to choose between putting food on the table and paying their bills, no one in these communities should be left behind.

Targeted investments into communities with ongoing anti-poverty projects would be beneficial in reducing need in Maryland as inflation and rising food costs continue to impact everyday Marylanders. The Maryland Food Bank appreciates any effort to increase housing and bring down costs to put more money in Maryland families' pockets, and considers this bill a meaningful step towards eliminating the root causes of hunger.

For these reasons, the Maryland Food Bank respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 503.