



TESTIMONY FOR HB0503 Land Use - Regional Housing Infrastructure Gap (Housing for Jobs Act)

Bill Sponsor: Speaker Jones

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0503 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Governor Wes Moore identified housing as a priority last year, with a shortage of 96,000 units in Maryland. This crisis has left over 5,000 people, including 2,000 families, unhoused. The regional disparity between the supply of suitable housing and demand is unacceptable to MLC members.

HB0503 tackles the regional housing infrastructure gap, measured by the jobs-to-housing ratio. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning are required to calculate these gaps by counties and municipalities. The bill empowers local jurisdictions to reduce gaps by expediting housing project approvals and mandates timely approvals while prohibiting unjustifiable denials.

For residents, the Housing for Jobs Act ensures that all Marylanders have access to safe, affordable housing. Closing these gaps promotes social stability, economic growth, and well-being.

For the state, addressing regional disparities means greater economic growth across the state by attracting businesses and workers. The bill promotes efficient housing project approvals, alleviating shortages, and reducing the burden on local governments.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition wholeheartedly supports this bill and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.