



The Voice of Merit Construction

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TO: ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FROM: ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS

RE: H.B. 489 – MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR – STUDY ON BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR SINGLE-STAIRCASE BUILDINGS

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Associated Builders and Contractors of Maryland support H.B 489 which is before you today for consideration.

The current building code requirements, while prioritizing safety, may inadvertently hinder the construction of more affordable housing options. Single-staircase buildings, historically prevalent in older buildings, offer a potential pathway to reducing construction costs and increasing housing density, particularly in urban infill and redevelopment projects.

H.B. 489 mandates a thorough examination of building codes in other states, analysis of best practices, and consideration of critical factors such as fire safety, water supply, and the impact on housing costs. This evidence-based approach will ensure that any recommendations for code changes are grounded in sound data and prioritize both affordability and public safety.

The requirement for the Department to consult with a fire engineer from a public institution and a representative of a firefighters' union is essential. Their expertise will be invaluable in ensuring that any proposed changes to the building code maintain the highest standards of fire safety and protect both residents and first responders.

Furthermore, the bill's focus on increasing the affordable housing supply is timely and critical. Maryland faces a significant shortage of affordable housing, and this study offers a promising avenue for exploring solutions that can increase housing options for residents across the state.

The findings and recommendations resulting from this study will provide valuable guidance for future legislative and regulatory action. With that in mind, the over 1,500 member companies of ABC Maryland, respectfully request a favorable report on H.B. 489.

Marcus Jackson, Director of
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