



TO: House Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: House Bill 503, Land Use - Regional Housing Infrastructure Gap (Housing for Jobs Act)
DATE: March 4, 2025
POSITION: Favorable

LeadingAge Maryland supports House Bill 503, Land Use - Regional Housing Infrastructure Gap (Housing for Jobs Act).

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 150 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Uniquely, LeadingAge Maryland represents more than 100 affordable senior housing communities across the state. Members of LeadingAge Maryland provide health care, housing, and services to more than 20,000 older persons each year. Our mission is to be the trusted voice for aging in Maryland, and our vision is that Maryland is a state where older adults have access to the services they need, when they need them, in the place they call home.

Developing affordable senior housing is time consuming, expensive, and challenging. It is made even more difficult by inconsistent and unpredictable local development decisions. Many nonprofit development organizations including our members have spent tens of thousands of dollars to begin projects, gained support and worked collaboratively with local communities and zoning boards, only to have a project denied by the county council. At a time where affordable housing is in critically short supply, particularly for older adults, our state cannot afford to continue in this way.

House Bill 503 takes a critical step towards addressing the affordable housing shortage in Maryland. By requiring the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning to calculate regional housing infrastructure gaps, this bill will help identify areas where affordable housing is most needed. The bill's provisions for reducing local housing infrastructure gaps, such as allowing for the subtraction of housing units built near rail stations or affordable housing units, will also help to incentivize the development of affordable housing.

Furthermore, the bill's emphasis on objective, written development standards will help to ensure that housing development projects are approved in a fair and transparent manner. This

will help to reduce the uncertainty and delays that often plague housing development projects, making it easier to bring affordable housing options to market.

The need for affordable housing in Maryland is dire. The state's housing market has become increasingly unaffordable, with many residents struggling to find housing that meets their needs and fits their budget. This is particularly true for older adults, who often live on fixed incomes and face unique challenges in finding affordable housing. The importance of affordable senior housing cannot be overstated. Those 65 and over are experiencing homelessness at higher rates than other age groups, and as our state's population ages, the demand for affordable housing options that cater to seniors' needs will only continue to grow. Affordable senior housing is not just a matter of providing a roof over someone's head; it's about creating a safe, supportive, and healthy environment that allows seniors to thrive.

LeadingAge Maryland urges the passage of House Bill 503, which will help to address the critical need for affordable housing in Maryland. By supporting this bill, we can take a crucial step towards creating a more equitable and sustainable housing market that meets the needs of all Marylanders, particularly our older adults.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 503.

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