

Takoma Park 2025 - SB 513 FAV - Unlawful Restricti

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Position: FAV



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

House Environment and Transportation Committee

March 20, 2025

**SB 513: Real Property - Unlawfully Restrictive Covenant - Modification by Municipalities
Support as Amended**

The City of Takoma Park supports Senate Bill SB 513 as amended.

It is unlawful to refuse to sell or lease real property to a person because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, familial status, or disability or to include in any instrument a restrictive covenant based on such characteristics. Many deeds continue to contain unlawful restrictive language, despite it being unenforceable. Over 1200 properties within the City of Takoma Park have unlawful restrictive language in their deed.

The City supported changes in 2023 to § 3-112 of the Real Property Article which provided local governments with the ability to review deeds on file, and with the required notice, modify deeds to remove restrictive covenants. However, the City has found practical challenges in meeting the state's notification requirements to effectively remove these covenants. For example, how should the City define and identify persons with an ownership interest in a property?

The City appreciates the sponsors of this bill as it includes additional notification methods, like newspaper and website postings, which will make implementation easier.

The City of Takoma Park wishes to expedite the removal of covenants from all deeds within the city. We aim to correct historical injustices and affirm our stance against racism. But we need SB 513 to make this effort easier for our community and other municipalities wishing to follow our example.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 513.

HB513_Historic Tacoma Park_FAV

Uploaded by: Jim Douglas

Position: FAV

Historic Takoma, Inc.

7328 Carroll Avenue
Takoma Park, Maryland 20912
historictakoma.org

March 19, 2025

TESTIMONY OF HISTORIC TAKOMA, INC. IN SUPPORT OF SB 513 **Jennifer Martin, President**

Delegate Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Historic Takoma strongly **supports** the enactment of SB513, as amended, as a means to efficiently remove unlawful racial covenants on properties in the State of Maryland.

Historic Takoma, Inc. is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization incorporated in the State of Maryland in 1979 for the purpose of protecting, preserving, and sharing the history and culture of Takoma Park. Our organization has championed the removal of unlawful racial covenants, conducting relevant research, educating the community through workshops and talks, and helping residents remove such language from their deeds.

Our [Covenants Project](https://historictakoma.org/covenant/) (historictakoma.org/covenant/) documents the background and history of racial covenants and includes a database of all known racial covenants in Takoma Park with the location and text of those covenants. We developed a [guide for property owners](#) to use to request removal of unlawful racial covenants, have conducted a number of workshops on the removal process, and have worked with individual property owners to assist them with the removal process. Although the actual process is a simple one, it can be daunting to many property owners. With an estimated 1,100 or more covenants on properties in Takoma Park removal of them one by one is a tedious and lengthy endeavor.

As part of our work to both publicize the existence of these unlawful racial covenants and seek a more efficient means of removing them, we contacted the City of Takoma Park about utilizing the authority under current law for municipalities and counties to request removal of unlawful racial covenants.

Unfortunately the statute requires that, prior to requesting removal of the covenants, the city must notify anyone with an “ownership interest” in an affected property by first class mail. This imposes an enormous administrative and fiscal burden on the city. To provide such notice the city would need to identify all those with “ownership interest” (a vague and undefined term) and their mailing addresses. With over 1,100 properties affected in Takoma Park this could require hundreds of hours of city staff time and the preparation of several thousand letters. Throughout the state, other municipalities wishing to pursue removal of unlawful racial covenants face the same obstacles. The current statute is well intentioned but is practically unworkable.

The proposed legislation, SB513, addresses the practicality issues by providing the municipality with flexibility to provide notice to property owners. The amendments to the original bill further simplify and streamline the notice process. Combined with many outreach/communication tools (such the city newsletter and social media along with Historic Takoma’s website, newsletter, and social media) the simplified and streamlined notice options provide an efficient means of notice to those with “ownership interest.” The public will be afforded notice and the city will be spared the extreme administrative and fiscal burden of the current notice requirement. This is a win-win situation for property owners, the City of Takoma Park, and other municipalities in the State of Maryland, all of whom have an interest in removing these unlawful covenants.

Once enacted, Historic Takoma stands ready to assist the city with the notification process and submission of the necessary documentation for removal of the unlawful covenants. Your support and approval of the legislation will make accomplishing this public policy goal a reality and will further the cause of social justice in our communities.

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HBSB513 sponsor testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Linda Hanifin Bonner

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY

**Senate Bill 513
Real Property - Unlawfully Restrictive Covenant Modifications
County or Municipality Notice Requirements
March 20, 2025**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to provide important details regarding SB 513 - Real Property - Unlawfully Restrictive Covenant Modifications - County or Municipality Notice Requirements

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Henson from the 30th Legislative District of Anne Arundel County, MD.

While the request for this bill originates from the Mayor of Takoma Park – its applicability is statewide -- and is intended to address an existing issue within a municipalities current requirement to send a “written notice of intent to execute and record the restrictive covenant modifications by first class mail, to all persons with an ownership interest in the property.” Many municipalities within Maryland find this current practice is challenging and costly to do.

The modification in SB 513, adds content in Section 3-112-C-2 (iii) that enables municipalities to strengthen their notification options. These actions include posting a public notice (i) in a newspaper or municipal newsletter, which provides for a more general circulation to the public within the municipality, (ii) on the door of the courthouse or available bulletin board, and (iii) on the official website of the municipality.

This Bill is also supported by the County Clerks Association and the Honorable Talisha Searcy, Mayor of Takoma Park, MD.

In closing, I respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report for SB 513 to strengthen the public notification process for restrictive covenants.

Poyer Testimony for SB 513.pdf

Uploaded by: Scott Poyer

Position: FAV

SB513 Real Property - Unlawfully Restrictive Covenant Modifications - County or Municipality Notice Requirements

Environment and Transportation Committee – March 20, 2025

Sponsor: Senator Shaneka Henson

Position: Favorable

Written Testimony of Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Anne Arundel County

Thank you, members of the committee, for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 513. My name is Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County. I am also a member of the Maryland Circuit Court Clerks Association, which represents the 24 elected clerks of the circuit court in Maryland.

Myself, and other members of the Clerks of the Circuit Court, have reviewed SB 513 and have no objections to the bill. I believe the bill, as written, strengthens Maryland statutes related to unlawfully restrictive covenants on real property.

Accordingly, I ask the committee for a favorable report on SB 513.

MDE SB856 INF E&T.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy D Baker

Position: INFO



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

Senate Bill 856

Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Position: Information
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Date: March 20, 2025
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is providing **INFORMATIONAL** testimony for SB 856.

Bill Summary

Senate Bill 856 would require MDE, in coordination with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL), and the Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) to develop and update, as necessary, a centralized website providing information about mold remediation and dampness and an informational pamphlet on mold that includes resources in the State relating to mold and how tenants can control mold growth in their unit. MDE can use the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home" pamphlet in lieu of developing a separate pamphlet.

Additionally, on or before June 1, 2027, MDE, in consultation with MDH, DHCD, MDL, and DGS, would be required to establish in regulation uniform standards for mold assessment and mold remediation.

Position Rationale

MDE, in collaboration with our sister agencies, would be able to create a centralized state website and an informational pamphlet on mold with current resources. However, developing regulations would have a fiscal impact as no administration within the Department currently has the expertise on mold assessments or remediation. As such, MDE anticipates that we would need to hire a third party consultant with the relevant expertise to inform the creation of the new regulations, as well as support public outreach. Currently, there are no federal regulations or standards for airborne mold contaminants.

Additionally, it is unclear if MDE would have any enforcement responsibility or would be responsible for ensuring compliance with the promulgated regulations. If MDE is required to enforce those regulations, the Department would need significant resources to create a new program within the agency to ensure landlords are properly performing mold assessments and remediations.

Accordingly, MDE respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberation.

Contact: Jeremy Baker, Director of Government Relations
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