

January 15, 2025

Hearing Testimony by Bill Sponsor Senator Ron Watson, Ph.D.

SB150 Real Property – Recordation and Land Records – Requirements

Good afternoon, Senators:

I am delighted to come before the Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee today under the leadership of my Democratic colleagues from Montgomery County, Chair, Senator William Smith, Jr. and Vice Chair, Senator Jeff Wald Streicher.

I am here to present Senate Bill 150 for your consideration today. This bill was requested by all 24 Clerks of the Circuit Courts with responsibility for the recordation of Real Property Land Records in the state of Maryland.

The purpose of this bill is not to make any substantive changes in Land Records recordation or requirements. It is merely to update sections of the Real Property Article to reflect current technologies and practices that are already being followed today. The problem is that the law has not kept pace with current systems and procedures, and this bill seeks to bring the statutes up to date.

Senate bill 150 (HB 0347 Cross-filed with Del. Holmes) will update references to outdated language and practices, such as requirements for paper books and microfilm records. It replaces these references to outdated tools to allow for modern electronic technology for the submission and recordation of Land Records.

This bill is necessary to clarify the statute to include what clerks are actually doing in practice versus current law and is supported by the entire industry. Prior to introduction, input on this bill was sought from representatives of the Title Industry, including the Maryland Land Title Association, Real Estate Bar, and Title Underwriting companies.

Given this bill's full support by all 24 Clerks of the Circuit Courts and industry professionals, I ask that the committee give a favorable report to this update of the Land Records Statutes including two amendments needed to ensure the Articles accuracy.

If there are any questions relating to the bill's specific changes, I will defer to the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, Scott Poyer, who is here to testify in support of the bill.