
ROBERT G. CASSILLY
Harford County Executive



ROBERT S. McCORD
Director of Administration

March 31, 2026

The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 267 – "Land Use - Residential Housing - Oversight, Regulation, and Taxation (Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act)"

Dear Chairwoman Valderrama and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Harford County to respectfully express our opposition to Senate Bill 267, the Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act.

Harford County acknowledges the critical need for increased housing supply and affordability across Maryland. We share the goal of ensuring residents have access to safe, attainable, and diverse housing options. However, SB 267 advances this objective in a manner that would significantly erode local land use authority, diminish the ability of counties to plan responsibly, and impose a one-size-fits-all framework that does not account for unique local circumstances.

Local governments are on the front lines of planning and land development. We are intimately familiar with our community's needs, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and growth patterns. Our comprehensive plans and land use regulations reflect years of public engagement, studies, and careful consideration of the adequacy of transportation networks, public safety, schools, water and sewer capacity, and fiscal sustainability. SB 267, as currently drafted, would narrow local discretion and potentially preempt local standards in ways that undermine this locally informed process that is critical to the health and sustainable growth of our county.

Of particular concern is the bill's authorization of standardized administrative review processes and its encouragement of regulatory frameworks that limit local flexibility. While predictability in permitting is a laudable goal, it cannot come at the expense of a county's ability to manage its own growth and safeguard the public interest. Local approval processes are structured to balance housing production with infrastructure readiness and community character, informed by local residents and stakeholders.

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Additionally, mandates for state housing production targets and stability guarantees for developers, without corresponding support or resources for local governments to implement and manage these requirements, will shift burdens and costs from developers to counties without clear offsets. Harford County already faces significant demands to upgrade infrastructure, expand public services, and maintain roadways due to growth pressures. Placing additional unfunded administrative requirements on local governments exacerbates these challenges.

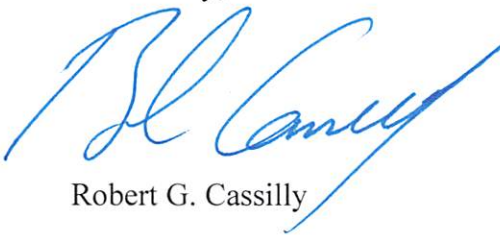
Counties are committed to advancing housing solutions, including supporting affordable and workforce housing initiatives, updating zoning to encourage diverse housing types, and leveraging public-private partnerships. These strategies are most effective when developed and implemented at the local level, in collaboration with stakeholders and in alignment with comprehensive plans.

For these reasons, Harford County respectfully urges the Committee to oppose SB 267 as currently drafted. We recommend that any statewide housing reform legislation preserve meaningful local control and provide appropriate resources and flexibility to support counties in meeting housing needs without undermining local planning authority.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 267.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Cassilly", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert G. Cassilly