

February 16th, 2026

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

RE: MBIA Letter of Opposition HB 716 Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors – Private Property Access – Prohibition

Dear Chair Valderrama,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **HB 716 Land Surveyors and Property Line Surveyors – Private Property Access – Prohibition**.

While MBIA understands the intent of HB 716 is to address landowner concerns regarding property access, the legislation as written creates disproportionate barriers to essential professional services. By placing a broad restriction on licensed surveyors, the bill effectively imposes a statewide moratorium on routine surveying that will severely damage the real estate and construction industries and prevent surveyors from serving individual homeowners who rely on timely boundary surveys, location surveys, and property line determinations for refinances, fence installations, additions, and other everyday property needs.

The bill prohibits entering private property without written permission during deer firearms season. While most survey work is commissioned by a specific client, accurate boundary surveys require surveyors to locate evidence on adjoining properties. To certify a property line for a homeowner, surveyors are legally and professionally mandated to find monuments that often sit on a neighbor's land. If a neighbor, who may be an absentee landlord, an LLC, or involved in a boundary dispute, refuses to sign a permission slip, the survey cannot be completed.

A blackout period that disrupts real estate closings during the deer firearms hunting season creates a significant window of time—typically two weeks in late November/December and additional days in January—during which surveyors would be effectively banned from working on many properties. This coincides with the busiest time for year-end real estate settlements. If a surveyor cannot enter an adjoining property to verify a corner, the survey stops. If the survey stops, the mortgage company will not fund the loan. As a result, families attempting to close on homes will face delays, lost interest rate locks, and breach of contract—all because a surveyor could not obtain a signature from a neighbor.

Under this bill, a licensed surveyor could be charged with a misdemeanor, face up to 6 months in jail, and be subject to a \$5,000 civil penalty. MBIA believes this is an extreme response to a safety concern that is already managed through standard protocols.

Surveyors are professionals who prioritize safety. Standard field practice requires the use of high-visibility blaze orange or pink vests and PPE, often making surveyors more visible than the hunters themselves. There is no evidence of a safety crisis involving surveyors and hunters in Maryland that justifies a legislative ban on our right to practice.

As currently written, the bill applies statewide. This means a surveyor working in a dense subdivision in Silver Spring or downtown Baltimore, where no deer hunting occurs, could be criminally liable for stepping across a property line without written permission during these dates.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee