

SB 0036/HB0239: Land Use – Zoning – Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026):
Please vote TO **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Economic Matters Committee and Education, Energy & the Environment Committee Chair and Members of the Committees,

I respectfully write to **oppose SB 0036 / HB 0239 – Land Use – Zoning – Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)**.

While I understand and appreciate the intent behind this legislation—particularly the desire to expand housing options for first-time buyers and seniors—**this bill goes too far by overriding local zoning authority and imposing a one-size-fits-all mandate on Maryland communities.**

Land use and zoning decisions are inherently local. Counties and municipalities are best positioned to evaluate infrastructure capacity, school enrollment, traffic patterns, environmental constraints, water and sewer availability, and the unique character of their neighborhoods. **SB 0036/HB 0239 would significantly limit that local discretion**, forcing changes that may not be appropriate or sustainable in many areas.

Housing affordability is a real and serious concern, but **statewide zoning mandates are a blunt tool**. This bill risks unintended consequences, including increased strain on already overburdened infrastructure, loss of community input, and development that is misaligned with local comprehensive plans. In some cases, it could even **undermine the very quality of life that makes communities desirable places to live.**

Moreover, true affordability is driven by many factors beyond zoning alone—such as construction costs, interest rates, impact fees, and infrastructure investment. **Removing local zoning authority does not guarantee that new housing will actually be affordable**, nor that it will serve the populations this bill aims to help.

Maryland should pursue housing solutions that **respect local governance, encourage thoughtful planning, and promote collaboration rather than preemption**. Incentives, funding partnerships, and locally tailored approaches are far more likely to produce sustainable and widely supported outcomes than mandates imposed from Annapolis.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **vote to OPPOSE SB 0036 / HB 0239**.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued service to the people of Maryland.

Sincerely,
Trudy Tibbals