
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 325 – Land Use – Permitting – Development Rights (Maryland Housing Certainty Act)

Dear Chairwoman Valderrama and Committee Members,

On behalf of the citizens of Harford County, I respectfully submit this letter in opposition to Senate Bill 325.

Harford County supports efforts to reduce unnecessary barriers to housing development and increase certainty in the permitting process. However, SB 325 would significantly restrict local land use and development authority by locking in regulatory standards at the time a housing application is deemed complete, regardless of evolving local planning goals, updated ordinances, or changes in infrastructure capacity.

Local governments are charged with balancing housing supply with infrastructure readiness, environmental protection, public safety, and community character. Comprehensive plans and development regulations are updated through deliberate, public processes to reflect the needs and priorities of residents and stakeholders. SB 325's approach would prevent county and municipal governments from applying updated regulations to pending projects, even when those updates address critical issues such as traffic capacity, stormwater management, environmental protection, or community compatibility.

Further, the bill's vesting provisions could undermine local planning objectives and long-range coordination. Allowing projects to proceed indefinitely under outdated standards weakens the ability of counties to manage growth responsibly, adapt to changing conditions, and ensure that development investments align with current infrastructure and service capacity.

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The bill is also designated as imposing a mandate on local governments yet does not provide corresponding resources to support the administrative, legal, or operational impacts associated with administering vesting protections for significant numbers of projects over extended periods. This shift of responsibility without adequate support creates unfunded costs for counties at a time when local governments are already managing constrained budgets and competing priorities.

Counties are committed to improving predictability in permitting and to reducing unnecessary delays in housing development. We have pursued local reforms, streamlined review processes, and enhanced coordination with stakeholders to achieve these goals while preserving local planning authority and accountability.

For these reasons, Harford County respectfully urges the Committee to oppose SB 325. We encourage the development of housing policy that supports both certainty for applicants and the ability of local governments to adapt regulations in response to evolving community needs and priorities.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Cassilly", written in a cursive style.

Robert G. Cassilly