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HB1175

March 5, 2026

TO: Members of the House Economic Matters and Ways & Means Committees

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 1175 - Land Use - Residential Housing - Oversight, Regulation, and Taxation
(Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act)

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

Chairs Valderrama and Wilkins, Vice Chairs Charkoudian and Feldmark, and Members of the Committees, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) is submitting this Letter of Information on HB 1175, the Building Affordably in My Back Yard (BAMBY) Act.

BCA recognizes the intent of BAMBY and shares the General Assembly's focus on expanding housing supply and improving affordability statewide. Over the 2025 interim, MACo worked with member jurisdictions to help shape a locally grounded package that advances a balanced housing strategy. BAMBY takes a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach—touching land use, renters protections, state actions and market tools—with the goal of more predictability and faster approvals for housing projects. BCA supports several elements of this approach and appreciates the effort to address the shortage through multiple policy levers.

A core consideration for the BCA, however, is the challenge of making block-by-block land use and permitting decisions through statewide mandates. Baltimore City is already modernizing its permitting operations through data-driven, locally tailored reforms aimed at improving speed, predictability, and transparency for all applicants. For example, **the median time to issue a residential permit decreased from three days in October 2025 to two days in January 2026 following targeted system improvements.** Baltimore's goal is to move reviews and permits as efficiently as possible across all project types, while maintaining public safety and consistent application of standards. BCA is concerned that provisions in BAMBY, the Governor's housing package, and other bills under consideration could move toward a state-directed "fast-track" framework that introduces operational complexity and fails to recognize community levels realities not apparent to state policymakers.

Elements BCA Supports

Statewide landlord registry: Baltimore City already has a local registry, but still experiences difficulty identifying and reliably contacting certain property owners. A statewide registry with

annual certification and a public point of contact would strengthen compliance and improve coordination.

Tools to streamline approvals: Because housing production is complex and multi-factor, BCA supports efforts that help local governments improve and accelerate permitting and review processes, where appropriate.

Elements Needing Further Clarification

Regulatory and construction certainty: BAMBY and the Governor’s Housing Certainty Act include provisions that could require changes to local permitting and tracking systems, including keeping approvals open for extended periods. In Baltimore, most permits are issued for six months, while larger projects are typically issued for 12–24 months. Extensions are available when progress is demonstrated, and in limited circumstances the City may deny extensions when no work is underway and a property has become a nuisance under City law. Given the technical nature of these provisions, BCA cannot yet estimate the scope of needed system changes or associated costs.

Housing production targets: BAMBY and the Governor’s 2025 Housing Executive Order establish production targets for local governments. Baltimore has a permissive zoning code and significant opportunity for development. While BCA values data-driven planning, production outcomes are also shaped by market conditions and financing constraints beyond local or state control. Targets should be structured carefully to reflect these realities and avoid expectations that are disconnected from practical feasibility.

In summary, BCA supports the overarching goals of BAMBY and shares the focus on increasing housing supply and affordability. However, because BAMBY—and other major housing proposals—includes broad statewide directives, the BCA is concerned that some provisions may not yet be sufficiently tailored to reflect existing reforms, operational realities, and the local context of Baltimore City and other local governments.

For these reasons, the Baltimore City Administration respectfully requests **consideration of this Letter of Information** on HB 1175.