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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Testimony in Favor of HB0431
Maryland Real Property - Updating Real Property Records

To Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and members of the Economic Matters Committee:

I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 431 to modernize Maryland's plat recording statute. This legislation, brought to me by the Maryland Board of Land Surveyors, is necessary to reflect current surveying practice, digital land records, and archival standards.

As technology evolves, our statutes must evolve with it. HB0431 makes three specific, common-sense changes to update the recordation process:

1. Enabling Digital Submission First, the bill removes references to specific physical media, such as Mylar, from the statute. Specifying physical materials in the code has become a barrier to modernization. By removing these rigid definitions, we allow the industry to shift toward digital submittals and newer technologies as they become available. Importantly, this change relies on the Maryland State Archives' published digitization standards to ensure all records meet quality and preservation requirements.
2. Updating Survey Standards for GPS Technology Second, HB0431 updates survey requirements to reflect the capabilities of modern Global Positioning Systems (GPS). Current law requires "traverse points" to be shown on record plats—a holdover from the days when surveyors needed a direct line of sight between points. With GPS, this "line of sight" is no longer necessary.
 - This bill removes the obsolete requirement for traverse points.
 - It maintains the requirement that four points be shown with coordinates to ensure accuracy.
 - However, it grants the licensed professional surveyor the discretion to determine which points receive those coordinates, rather than mandating a specific geometry that is no longer technically required.

3. Clarifying Terminology and Updating Fees Finally, the bill creates consistency in our code by updating the archaic term "marsh" to "wetland," aligning it with modern environmental definitions. It also adjusts the recordation fee structure from a flat \$5.00 fee to a "per page" fee. This ensures that the costs cover the actual administrative work required by the Clerks of the Court to process and index larger, multi-page subdivision plats.

HB0431 is a housekeeping measure that supports our land surveyors, aids our court clerks, and future-proofs our land records.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB0431.