



Chair Kris Valderrama
and Members, Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 5, 2026

House Bill 1137 – Bring Back Main Street – Favorable

Dear Chair Valderrama and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Maryland Policy Director for Greater Greater Washington, a nonprofit that supports better housing, land use, and transportation policies throughout Greater Washington and beyond. **We're proud to support House Bill 1137, the Bring Back Main Street Act, and thank Delegate Allen for his leadership on this important issue.**

You've heard it so many times this session: we are in a housing crisis. Due to 20 years of underbuilding, home prices continue to rise, middle-class families are leaving the state, and both local and state governments are facing budget shortfalls. [Our poll](#), released earlier this month, found that housing costs, inflation, and taxes are Marylanders' top three concerns.

At the same time, [we have a glut of underused and vacant commercial space](#): aging shopping centers and office buildings that have reached the end of their useful life and don't meet the needs of modern businesses. This bill aims to solve both problems at once, by allowing homes to be built on commercially zoned land, something that 80% of Marylanders support—across county lines and party lines.

Many communities in Maryland currently allow housing in commercial zones (aka mixed-use zoning), while others place significant restrictions on it or limit it to certain areas. This bill would establish common development standards for housing on commercial land, which creates predictability for property owners, while giving local governments some flexibility for how to craft zoning rules that fit their needs. It will bring new life to commercial corridors while giving more Marylanders the chance to live close

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to the things that matter: daily needs, jobs, transportation, friends and loved ones, health care, faith communities, and so on.

States across the nation have embraced this type of legislation, including Texas, Rhode Island, and most recently Virginia, where their “Housing Near Jobs” bill [has just passed the House and Senate](#). We can do the same this year with your favorable report.

Sincerely,

Dan Reed
Maryland Policy Director