

February 12, 2026

Chair Kriselda Valderrama
House Economic Matters Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB36/HB239 – Land Use - Zoning – Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)

Dear Chair Valderrama and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Fello, we write in support of ***SB36/HB239 – Land Use - Zoning – Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)***.

Across Maryland, Fello is building communities where people belong. With a team of more than 650 employees, Fello supports over 5,000 people with disabilities each year – creating opportunities that empower people to live the lives they choose. From advancing equity and respect to expanding access and connection, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. One powerful way this comes to life is through Fello Communities: beautiful, safe, and accessible rental housing that offers choice and stability for residents across income levels, from affordable to market-rate homes.

SB36/HB239 is a critical step in addressing Maryland’s deepening housing shortage and expanding attainable housing options for young families, older Marylanders, essential workers, and first-time renters and buyers across our State.

We commend Governor Moore’s leadership in confronting one of the most pressing challenges facing Maryland — the lack of affordable and attainable housing. Our State currently faces a housing gap where demand far exceeds supply, and without decisive action, this deficit continues to drive up costs and force Marylanders to seek housing elsewhere.

The Starter and Silver Homes Act removes unnecessary zoning barriers that can make it difficult — and expensive — to build smaller, more affordable homes and rental units. Under this bill, local jurisdictions would be prohibited from enforcing certain minimum lot sizes, setback requirements, lot coverage limits, and design restrictions that hinder the development of appropriately scaled housing options. It also ensures that smaller homes, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units can be built in areas zoned for single-family use, increasing housing density and helping to address the current shortage.

This legislation complements the Governor’s broader Housing Growth and Affordability Agenda, which strategically pairs zoning reform with transit-oriented development and regulatory certainty measures. Together, these policies are designed to remove barriers, accelerate housing production,

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and provide more Maryland families with affordable, accessible, and high-quality housing options.

The Starter and Silver Homes Act will:

- Expand housing options by allowing smaller single-family homes, townhouses, and rental units that cost significantly less to build and maintain.
- Support first-time buyers, working families, seniors, and renters who are seeking quality, affordable housing.
- Encourage smart growth by aligning land use policy with the economic and demographic realities facing Marylanders today.

By modernizing zoning laws and removing barriers to the creation of starter and silver homes and rental units, Maryland can make meaningful progress toward a more affordable, inclusive housing market that gives every resident a fair opportunity to thrive.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB36/HB239.

Sincerely,



Jonathon Rondeau
President & CEO