

March 10th, 2026

The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: MBIA Letter of Support HB 1517 Land Use - Qualified Project - Retaliatory Downzoning

Dear Chair Valderrama,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **HB 1517 Land Use - Qualified Project - Retaliatory Downzoning**.

This bill requires local jurisdictions to allow the density of a qualified project that has been subject to retaliatory downzoning to exceed the density otherwise authorized. MBIA is in full support of this bill, as we have often times seen projects that meet local planning goals and zoning standards face opposition after they are proposed. This leads to uncertainty in the development process and targeted downzoning that places limits on permitted residential density. By specifically defining retaliatory downzoning and allowing qualified projects to continue to move through the process with reasonable density adjustments, HB 1517 protects our industry from targeted downzoning. It ensures that zoning decisions are based on consistent planning principles rather than targeted project opposition. The number one concern for our industry in today's environment is a lack of consistency in the development process. Bills like HB 1517 that provide clearer, more predictable development processes will create more opportunities to build housing across the state.

HB1517 addresses a real and recurring problem: **local officials reducing density only after a project becomes unpopular**, even when the project complied with all rules at the time of application. This practice—**retaliatory downzoning**—undermines fairness, predictability, and the rule of law. The bill restores integrity to the development review process by ensuring that **zoning decisions cannot be weaponized** against compliant projects

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee