

## **Testimony House Bill 239**

Committee: Economic Matters

### **Position: Unfavorable**

Chairwoman Valderrama, and Members of the Committee,

The City of Seat Pleasant respectfully submits this testimony in opposition to House Bill 239.

While the City recognizes and supports the urgent need to expand housing opportunities across Maryland, House Bill 239 relies on broad state preemption of local land use standards in a manner that risks undermining coordinated planning, infrastructure readiness, and community-scale implementation—particularly in small municipalities that serve important regional functions.

Development decisions within the City of Seat Pleasant have impacts that extend beyond municipal boundaries. Changes in density, zoning, and development patterns directly affect traffic circulation, public safety response times, pedestrian safety, and the delivery of essential services for both residents and visitors. As a municipality that functions as part of a larger regional network within Prince George's County, Seat Pleasant must ensure that growth is carefully aligned with infrastructure capacity and service availability.

For a city like Seat Pleasant—where infrastructure systems, road networks, stormwater management, and public facilities must accommodate both local residents and broader countywide activity—state preemption of local planning authority could accelerate development without the necessary coordination of services and capital improvements. Housing growth that is not paired with infrastructure investment risks placing additional strain on already limited municipal resources and could create unintended consequences for quality of life and public safety.

The City supports increasing the supply of housing, including housing options that serve seniors, workforce households, and first-time homebuyers. However, Seat Pleasant believes these goals are best achieved through enabling legislation that strengthens local and county planning efforts rather than through preemptive mandates that remove discretion from those responsible for managing on-the-ground impacts. Sustainable housing production is most successful when paired with infrastructure investment, service planning, and meaningful community engagement—not when detached from them.

Municipal governments bear responsibility for addressing the real-world consequences of development, including public works demands, emergency service coverage, code

enforcement, and maintenance of public spaces and amenities. When decision-making authority is shifted upward without corresponding responsibility or resources, municipalities are left to manage outcomes they did not shape and may not have the capacity to support.

For these reasons, the City of Seat Pleasant respectfully urges the Committee to vote unfavorably on House Bill 239 as currently drafted. The City encourages the General Assembly to pursue housing solutions that strengthen coordination among the State, counties, and municipalities while preserving the ability of local governments to plan responsibly for growth and ensure that development is aligned with infrastructure and service capacity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mayor Kelly Porter