

DATE: March 5, 2026

BILL NO: House Bill 1137

TITLE: Land Use - Multifamily Developments and Mixed-Use Developments - Authorization (Bring Back Main Street Act)

COMMITTEE: House Economic Matters Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

The Bring Back Main Act requires counties with a population greater than 150,000 to allow multifamily and mixed use developments on commercial or recreational zoned land that is served by water and sewer. These projects would be approved administratively without requiring a public hearing or any other zoning actions. The bill also limits certain local zoning restrictions that could impede development, including density limits, setback requirements, and minimum off street parking mandates. It further restricts private homeowners' associations from imposing unreasonable rules that increase the cost of developments, except in the case of designated historic properties.

Background and Analysis:

Maryland continues to face challenges in expanding housing supplies, particularly in growing counties where regulatory and zoning barriers can slow the development of multifamily and mixed-use housing. Under current law, these barriers make it difficult to reuse underutilized commercial or recreational land, limiting housing options and slowing neighborhood revitalization, which constrains economic growth.

HB 1137 encourages the development of multifamily and mixed-use housing by advancing approvals and reducing unnecessary restrictions. By making it easier to convert underused properties into residential and mixed spaces, the bill supports increased housing supply in the state. At the same time, counties will be able to retain the ability to regulate site design and require on site parking which ensures that developments remain compatible with local planning priorities.

Additionally, the bill limits unreasonable restrictions from private covenants and homeowners' associations that could potentially block development, while protecting designated historic properties. SB 289 represents an important tool for increasing housing opportunities, supporting mixed use development, and fostering stronger, and more resilient communities across Maryland.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 1137.