



COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

ALLISON M. PICKARD
Second District

February 17, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 548 – Land Use – Permitting – Development Rights (Maryland Housing Certainty Act)

Dear Chair Valderrama and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for **House Bill 548 (2026 Regular Session), the Maryland Housing Certainty Act**, sponsored by Delegate Dylan Behler, which is scheduled for a hearing on February 19, 2026.

Maryland continues to face a critical housing shortage that drives up costs for families, workers, and seniors across the state. House Bill 548 takes a meaningful and pragmatic step toward addressing this challenge by creating a quicker, clearer, and more predictable development approval process that will help accelerate housing production and reduce unnecessary delays.

By requiring local governments to evaluate housing applications based on the regulations in effect at the time a substantially complete application is submitted, HB 548 provides much-needed certainty for housing developers and investors. Establishing vested rights for approved projects ensures that housing proposals are not derailed by shifting rules after significant time and resources have already been committed. This predictability is essential for encouraging responsible development and increasing the supply of housing statewide.

Additionally, the bill's provisions delaying the collection of certain development excise taxes and impact fees until project completion help reduce upfront financial barriers that



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can stall or prevent projects from moving forward. These reforms strike a reasonable balance by supporting housing production while preserving local authority and fiscal responsibility.

House Bill 548 reflects a thoughtful, evidence-based approach to improving housing affordability and availability in Maryland. I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report and advance this important legislation.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to addressing Maryland's housing needs.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison M. Pickard".

Allison M. Pickard