

Testimony For the Maryland General Assembly

House Economic Matters Committee

Regarding: **State Department of Assessments and Taxation - Blockchain-Based Real Property Title Pilot Study - Establishment - HB0810**

Presented by: Jacqueline Cooper, CEO, Maryland Blockchain Association

Date: February 26, 2026

Dear Chair Valderrama , Vice Chair Charkoudian and Members of the Committee.

My name is Jacqueline Cooper, CEO of the Maryland Blockchain Association as well as CEO of the Blockchain Legal Institute. I am here to testify in support of **Delegate Taylor's bill** related to the Blockchain-Based Real Property Title Pilot Study - Establishment. This legislation aims to leverage emerging blockchain technology to improve transparency, reduce fraud, and strengthen property ownership verification in our communities.

The Act proposes the establishment of a study within the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) to:

1. Explore blockchain-based recording and verification of real property titles.
2. Protect against unauthorized property occupation ("squatting").
3. Increase efficiency in title verification and transfers.
4. Provide law enforcement and courts with real-time tools to resolve property disputes.

This pilot program is designed to ensure community ownership rights, reduce administrative delays, and create a scalable model for statewide adoption in the future.

Rationale for Blockchain in Property Ownership

1. Efficiency and Accuracy

- Blockchain allows **instant verification of ownership**, reducing delays and administrative costs associated with traditional title searches.
- Smart contracts can automate **title transfers and escrow functions**, ensuring transactions are secure, efficient, and legally binding.

2. Fraud Prevention and Security

- Blockchain provides an **immutable, tamper-proof record**, significantly reducing fraudulent activity in real estate transactions.
- Law enforcement agencies can access verified ownership records in real time, which expedites the resolution of squatting and other unauthorized occupation disputes.

3. Legal Certainty

- Courts can rely on blockchain-verified records as authoritative evidence of ownership.
- This reduces legal disputes and increases confidence among property owners and potential buyers.

4. Community Empowerment

- Homeowners and investors gain a secure, transparent way to prove ownership.
- By reducing fraud and delays, communities can invest with confidence in local real estate markets.

5. Pilot Program Advantages

- The pilot will test blockchain implementation in **up to three counties**, allowing SDAT to study operational feasibility, costs, and scalability before considering statewide deployment.
- Voluntary opt-in ensures property owners can participate without risk to their existing legal rights.

This pilot program represents an **innovative step toward modernizing Maryland's real estate system**, supporting our communities, and protecting homeowners.

We urge the Committee to **support this bill** to:

1. Improve efficiency in property ownership verification.
2. Reduce fraud and squatting disputes.
3. Empower communities with secure and transparent property ownership tools.
4. Provide Maryland with a model for future statewide blockchain integration in real estate.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions regarding the implementation, benefits, and potential of this pilot program.

Jacqueline Cooper, CEO

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