



TO: The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
The Moore-Miller Administration

FROM: Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers

DATE: February 12, 2026

RE: **Favorable with Amendments** - Starter and Silver Homes Act: SB 36/HB 239

Dear Chair Feldman:

Please accept this written testimony from Chevy Chase Village, a municipal corporation located in Montgomery County, in strong support of the bill amendments filed yesterday by the Maryland Municipal League (MML). Most significantly, the amendments exempt municipal corporations from the bill, and the justifications in support of that exclusion are compelling.

We share MML's overriding concerns about preemption of local control over land use and development decisions, historically one of the most central functions of local government. The cumulative additional adverse effects of the bill as proposed include:

- a. Upzoning density for townhouse development "by right" will burden existing neighborhoods not planned for these densities. Serious public safety concerns include exacerbated flooding in older neighborhoods that lack adequate stormwater controls, and further limiting first responder access to homes on already overparked narrow local streets.
- b. The "one-size-fits-all" approach undercuts local government's investment in time, funding and public process to develop comprehensive plans, adopted pursuant to state planning mandates. Adopting this bill will widely erode public confidence in future planning efforts.
- c. Materially scaling back current setback and lot coverage limitations will, in our view, incentivize developers to build oversized single-family detached homes in our jurisdiction, an outcome at odds with the stated purpose of the bill.
- d. Last year the General Assembly adopted HB 1167/SB 36 (136-1 in the House; 44-0 in the Senate) which clarified that municipalities in Montgomery County have authority to enforce local building standards in housing projects with four or fewer units. That bill led to our support for a Montgomery County workforce housing bill that includes our community. This bill would effectively nullify that achievement along with our own housing efforts.
- e. We have no assurance that municipal revenue will be adequate to support increased burdens on public services (local policing, road maintenance, snow/trash removal) or increased administrative burdens (e.g., increased permit review, administrative hearings, judicial appeals, and related necessary training), potentially exposing us to monetary liability.

We urge adoption of the MML amendments, starting with an exemption for municipal corporations.

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