

Board of County Commissioners

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Senator Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Board of Carroll County Commissioners, we respectfully submit this letter in opposition to **SB 36: Land Use - Zoning - Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)**

Carroll County shares the State's interest in expanding housing availability. However, the approach proposed in this legislation, through broad prohibitions on local zoning authority, undermines the flexibility local governments rely on to respond effectively to housing needs in a way that reflects actual local conditions.

Local zoning is not arbitrary. It reflects years of comprehensive planning that considers infrastructure capacity, water and sewer availability, environmental conditions, public facilities, and the character of established communities. These factors vary significantly across jurisdictions. **Housing solutions that may be workable in one area may be infeasible or disruptive in another.**

In Carroll County, for example, many residential areas rely on private wells and septic systems or are constrained by limited public water and sewer capacity. Local zoning standards are calibrated to those realities. A uniform prohibition on local zoning tools does not account for these conditions and could create development pressure that existing infrastructure cannot support.

If the objective were solely to increase housing supply, local jurisdictions already possess the authority to adjust zoning where appropriate. The challenge is not reluctance, but feasibility. Local governments must balance growth with infrastructure, environmental protection, and community integrity.

The legislation also risks unintended consequences. When local governments lose targeted zoning tools, they may be forced to pursue broader, less precise code changes simply to retain control over growth patterns. That outcome would not improve housing availability and could lead to greater disruption for existing communities.

For these reasons, the Board of Carroll County Commissioners respectfully opposes SB 36 and urges the General Assembly to pursue housing solutions that work collaboratively with local governments rather than preempting them.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective and remain willing to engage in constructive dialogue.

Sincerely,

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CARROLL COUNTY



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