



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Tiffany Papanikolas

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Friday February 13th, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Opposition – HB 0239 / SB 0036 – Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Berwyn Heights, we respectfully submit this letter in strong opposition to HB 0239 / SB 0036, the Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026.

The Town of Berwyn Heights supports policies that expand housing opportunities and address affordability challenges throughout Maryland. However, this legislation contains provisions that undermine the fundamental authority of municipalities to manage local zoning and land use decisions, a power that is foundational to responsible municipal governance. Zoning is not simply a regulatory function—it is directly tied to infrastructure planning, transportation systems, environmental conditions, public safety, and municipal fiscal stability. Berwyn Heights, like many built-out municipalities, must carefully balance growth with existing infrastructure limitations, stormwater capacity, roadway design, and community character.

This bill's statewide zoning mandates represent a one-size-fits-all approach that does not account for the unique conditions of individual municipalities. Local governments are best positioned to determine how and where housing growth should occur, based on comprehensive local plans and direct community input. Berwyn Heights urges the General Assembly to pursue housing policy through partnership, not preemption. Maryland should prioritize tools that assist local governments, including planning support, technical assistance, incentives, and funding mechanisms that enable municipalities to modernize zoning codes in ways that reflect local needs and conditions.

For these reasons, the Mayor and Town Council of Berwyn Heights respectfully urge the Committees to issue an Unfavorable Report on HB 0239 / SB 0036. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Tiffany Papanikolas, Mayor

CC: District 22 State Delegation