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Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee.

I will be providing testimony in opposition to bill SB36 alongside mayors across Maryland who all understand exactly what is at stake.

Let me be clear from the start: municipalities want more housing. We want the same outcomes Governor Moore wants — more inventory, more affordability, more options for young families and seniors. We are already modernizing zoning, encouraging infill, and planning for growth.

But SB36 does something fundamentally different.

It strips municipalities of their zoning authority — the very authority we use to ensure growth is safe, feasible, and fiscally responsible. And I am here to say, as plainly as I can: that is unacceptable.

This bill is built on the false premise that local zoning is a primary barrier to housing production. It is not.

Housing affordability is shaped by state-controlled factors: utility regulation, energy costs, environmental permitting timelines, infrastructure financing, and property tax assessments. Municipalities do not control these drivers — but we live with the consequences when residents can't afford their homes.

And here is the part that should give every member of this Committee pause:

Even DHCD's own data contradicts the one-size-fits-all mandate in this bill.

According to DHCD's published 2030 growth targets, resulting from Governor Moore's "Housing Starts Here" executive order:

- Sykesville with 1,601 housing units — is expected to add 89 units between now and 2030. (We have 47 new townhomes coming online in 2027.)
- Havre de Grace: 365 units
- Leonardtown: 124
- Hagerstown target— 978 units
- No targets were even set for Barnesville & 40 other municipalities. But should this bill pass—they'll too lose their ability to participate in creating of a real solution.

DHCD knows that municipalities are not interchangeable.

Different size, different infrastructure, different capacity, different needs.

And yet SB36 ignores all of that.

DHCD's own data shows that only 30% of the targeted growth is municipal while the balance is in unincorporated areas. And if you remove Ocean City as an outlier, that figure drops to less than 25%. But here's the kicker, the legislation is only targeting priority growth areas, which is EVERY municipality in Maryland. So what are we doing?

If the State wants legislation that actually produces housing, then use your own data.
Trust your own analysis then build a framework that reflects the reality you already documented.
Mandating density without acknowledging these constraints is not just impractical — it risks public health, environmental compliance, and the financial stability of the very communities you expect to absorb this growth.

And the justification for this bill’s preemption simply isn’t true. According to DHCD:

- ✓ “Townhouses are typically 25–30% less expensive than single-family homes.”
- ✓ “Creating new housing options 30% less expensive will unlock homeownership for many more Maryland families.”

That sounds compelling — until you look at actual Maryland data.

According to Redfin *Housing Market Trends* in our zip code (South Carroll County’s Freedom District) Current Median Sale Price for a:

- **single-family home = \$557,500**
- **townhouse = \$564,365 (\$7K MORE!!)**

Clearly, Townhouses in Sykesville do NOT sell for 25–30% less than single-family homes.

As DHCD reports, Maryland stopped building homes in 2011. So let me give you the real numbers from the Town of Sykesville, where we have built more townhouses than any other housing type in the last 15 years.

Raincliffe Townhomes (125 constructed 2011–2014)

- 2011: \$319,365 → first to come online
- 2014: \$364,340 → last to come online and sold to original owners; **MEDIAN HOME (all types) PRICE** in Sykesville that year \$357k

The very same house that was built and sold in 2011, sold again in 2016 for \$365k and again changed hands in 2020 for a sale price of \$405k. And now houses in that subdivision are selling for \$508k

Another townhome community came online in 2020 with its final home receiving U&O in Dec 2023.

Below are sale prices when unit originally sold (from SDAT Real Property Data Search) as compared to the Median Home Sale (all types) Prices during that year in 21784 zip code (from Redfin):

Parkside at Warfield Townhomes (149 constructed 2020–2024)

- 2020: \$468,855–\$498,900 **MEDIAN \$420k**
- 2021: \$474,015–\$568,265 **MEDIAN \$440k**
- 2022: \$539,990–\$561 **MEDIAN \$468k**
- 2023: \$567,000 **MEDIAN \$485k**
- 2024: \$600,000 **MEDIAN \$521k**
- And in 2025, these units are now selling for \$700,000 with **MEDIAN \$507,500**

From 2011 to the present, every single town home in Sykesville has sold for more than the median. **And since 2020 every newly constructed Townhouse sold for \$80K more than the median.**

So I ask this Committee:

Where is the Maryland specific data proving that SB36 will create affordability across Maryland’s municipalities?

Because the real-world data we have says the opposite.

This is why municipalities are pushing back.

Not because we oppose housing — but because the State’s rationale is not supported by evidence in Maryland’s economy. DHCD cites data from South Carolina and Texas. How does those state’s cost of living compare to ours? What’s the cost of building in those economies? What are their tax structures?

Municipalities want to be part of the solution. But in order for that to happen, we must be part of the planning process!

Municipalities are not asking for loopholes.

We are asking for reality.

We are asking for partnership, not preemption.

If the State wants real, measurable housing outcomes, the path is not SB36.

The path is a different bill entirely — one that:

- Sets statewide housing goals based on DHCD’s own data;
- Recognizes actual water and sewer capacity, not theoretical maps;
- Provides technical assistance, infrastructure funding, and cross-agency coordination.
- And allows municipalities to determine how to meet the targets within their own boundaries.

Set the goals.

Hold us accountable.

But let us implement solutions that actually work in our communities.

SB36, as written, will not get you there.

But municipalities stand ready to help craft the legislation that will.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacy C. Link', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stacy C. Link

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