



TESTIMONY FOR HB0691

State Government - Procedures - Permitting Efficiency for Housing Development Projects

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lopez

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0691 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The housing problem in Maryland is reaching crisis proportions. Young people can't afford starter homes, townhomes and condos have exorbitant condo and HOA fees. Everything is too expensive and there is not enough housing to go around.

We desperately need to facilitate the construction of new housing or renovation of existing housing. This bill, if enacted, would require the various agencies that must issue permits prior to construction or renovation of housing create procedures that streamline the permitting process. This is a welcome effort that should help get construction moving more quickly.

However, our members want to make sure that any new construction or renovation related to housing is responsible in terms of the state's goals for lowering greenhouse gases and creating self-sufficient communities that promote public transportation. We believe that for these types of projects, there should be streamlined permitting. Projects that rely on fossil fuels and encourage sprawl and put more cars on the road should have a much longer permitting process.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee.