



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

DATE: March 1, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

BILL: HB 691

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 691. Municipalities across Maryland have consistently demonstrated their commitment to expanding housing opportunities, and this legislation reflects a meaningful step toward aligning State permitting processes with that shared goal.

House Bill 691 appropriately focuses on executive branch agencies responsible for issuing permits related to housing construction and requires the adoption of streamlined, coordinated procedures. By enabling concurrent or predictably sequenced filings, establishing expedited review frameworks, and promoting interagency consistency, the bill addresses delays that often occur at the State level without shifting new mandates or constraints onto local governments.

Importantly, the legislation is enabling in nature. It does not preempt municipal zoning authority, impose new local fiscal obligations, or restrict local planning discretion. Instead, it recognizes that improving housing production requires partnership across levels of government. The bill also allows State agencies, by agreement, to delegate permit review and approval responsibilities to counties or municipalities when appropriate, providing flexibility rather than mandates. The inclusion of the State Housing Ombudsman to help ensure consistency across agencies and report on progress adds transparency and accountability, while stakeholder consultation requirements ensure that the streamlined processes are practical and workable.

In short, House Bill 691 puts structure behind the State's commitment to increasing housing supply and signals that State government is prepared to modernize its own processes as part of the solution. Municipalities stand ready to continue working collaboratively with State partners to advance housing development in a manner that is efficient, predictable, and responsive to community needs.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 691.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Angelica Bailey Thupari: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, angelicab@mdmunicipal.org

Municipalities are home to 25% of Maryland's population while occupying less than 5% of the State's land area.