

February 17, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman  
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland Senate

**Re: Support for SB 36 (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)**

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Greater Washington Partnership (the Partnership), I am writing to express our support for the Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026 (SB 36). We applaud the Moore-Miller administration for introducing measures to improve housing access for Marylanders – particularly seniors and first-time homeowners.

The Partnership is a nonprofit alliance of nearly 50 leading corporate, university, and nonprofit employers in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia committed to championing the region's growth and vitality. Our member organizations provide 647,000 direct and supported jobs through their economic activity across the region, and together we leverage our collective resources to offer solutions to the region's critical workforce, transportation, and economic development challenges.

In October 2025, the Partnership released a Housing Playbook in response to the region's deepening housing crisis and its growing impact on economic competitiveness. The Playbook finds that housing affordability is one of the most significant constraints on regional growth, limiting employers' ability to recruit and retain workers while increasing commute times that reduce productivity and quality of life. As housing becomes increasingly unattainable, businesses struggle to attract talent – posing serious risks to community investment and long-term economic growth.<sup>i</sup>

Maryland's economy has grown slower than most peers in recent years, and research from the Comptroller's Office and other economic experts indicates that the high cost of living is a key factor limiting growth.<sup>ii</sup> Housing demand has far outpaced supply, driving costs upward faster than inflation and wage growth and contributing to today's affordability crisis. More than half of Maryland renters are now cost-burdened, paying over 30 percent of their income toward rent.<sup>iii</sup>

The Starter and Silver Homes Act directly addresses these challenges by expanding the types of homes that can be built in residential areas. By allowing smaller detached homes and townhouses and lifting restrictive zoning provisions, SB 36 will help reduce development costs, create more attainable housing options, and ensure that Maryland can retain and grow its most valuable asset: a highly skilled workforce.

For these reasons, we urge a **favorable** report on SB 36. Thank you for your consideration and shared commitment to reducing barriers to housing affordability and opportunity, as well as making this region the best place to live, work, and build a business.

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<sup>i</sup>[The Housing Playbook: A Practical Guide for Employers](#) (Greater Washington Partnership, 2025).

<sup>ii</sup> [State of the Economy Series: Housing & the Economy](#) (Comptroller of Maryland, Oct 2025)

<sup>iii</sup> [Turning the Key: Unlocking Maryland's Potential](#), (MD Dept. of Housing & Community Development, 2024; see *also* [State of Economy Report](#) (Office of Comptroller, 2024)

