



CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Acting County Administrator

February 17, 2026

RE: Letter of Information for SENATE BILL 267 - Land Use - Residential Housing - Oversight, Regulation, and Taxation (Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act)

Dear Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the Charles County Board of County Commissioners, I write to provide local perspective and information to the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee concerning Senate Bill 267, which proposes to alter existing local authority over certain land use and zoning matters. Local control of land use and zoning in Maryland has deep roots in the State's commitment to home-rule and community self-determination. While the State authorizes zoning through enabling legislation, Maryland has long placed primary responsibility for land-use decisions in the hands of counties and municipalities. This framework reflects the understanding that land-use issues are inherently local, shaped by distinct histories, geographies, economies, and civic priorities. Over time, local zoning authority has become a central tool for managing growth, protecting environmental and historic resources, coordinating infrastructure, and balancing private property rights with the public interest. The importance of local control in Maryland lies in its flexibility and responsiveness, allowing communities to adapt state policy goals to local conditions while giving residents a direct voice in shaping the places where they live and work.

We understand that the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) sponsored SB 267 to address legitimate concerns regarding affordability, while limiting the extent of preemption of local land use decisions. Unfortunately, it still overrides local governments' existing authority in several key areas. In this vein, Charles County still contends that land use and zoning decisions only work when local residents and local decision makers are able to respond to unique, local needs and desires.

It is important that the legislature preserves local land use and zoning authority for individual jurisdictions to adequately manage infrastructure, keep up with growth, respond to community concerns and vision, and maintain a fiscally constrained budget. It is also important to mention that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development has published a 2030 Housing Production Target for Charles County which is 5,516 units. With a 10-year average of 822 new residential units per year (including 1,178 in 2025) and an additional 200-300 units per year within our municipalities, Charles County is on target to meet the published DHCD target without state intervention in applicable regulations. Charles County is managing growth responsibly and effectively, while also meeting state targets. *Should this bill be found favorable, we urge the Senate to exempt counties already meeting the DHCD housing targets, as they are meeting their prescribed contribution of new housing units without undue fiscal impact.*

We recognize the intent of this bill is to encourage and streamline residential housing development across Maryland. It is important to note that an area that causes the greatest lag in local regulatory approvals is in meeting the State's stormwater regulations that are mandated to be administered by the counties. We believe that enhanced cooperation between the State and local regulatory agencies, and more flexibility in reaching the State performance goals, would spur a greater impact on the pace of housing creation than the rigid processes currently in place.

Charles County respectfully urges the General Assembly to carefully consider the impact of this proposal on local governments that are already planning for, and accommodating, growth in a responsible and transparent manner. Preserving local land-use and zoning authority is essential to ensuring that development aligns with community vision, infrastructure capacity, fiscal sustainability, and meaningful public participation. We remain committed to meeting Maryland's housing goals and supporting affordability, but firmly believe these objectives are best achieved through collaboration and partnership, not state preemption. We ask the Legislature to continue to respect and uphold the long-standing principle of local control in land-use decision-making.

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CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND**



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cc: Charles County Delegation