

Comments on Senate Bill 267: Permitting Reform

Prepared for: Members of the Maryland General Assembly

Prepared by: Eliza Terziev, Policy Analyst

Date: February 17, 2026



Dear members of the Maryland General Assembly,

My name is Eliza Terziev, and I serve as a policy analyst for Reason Foundation's Land Use and Housing Policy Team. Reason Foundation is a nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank dedicated to advancing free minds and free markets through research and policy analysis. Our housing and land use policy team provides research and technical assistance to lawmakers nationwide on zoning reform, permitting modernization, and housing affordability.

We share the same goals as the sponsors: streamlining the development process and advancing affordable housing in Maryland. Regulatory requirements account for about [25%](#) of the cost of new housing nationwide, and Maryland ranks as the sixth most regulated state in this area. The provisions in SB 267, namely creating standardized permitting and design expectations, would advance progress towards reducing the financial burden of regulation for new housing development.

Streamlining the approval process

By requiring counties with over 150,000 residents to create clear review standards and confirm application completeness within 30 days of submission, SB 267 is establishing regulatory certainty in these areas. Further, by locking in applicable land use and development standards at the time the application is verified complete, for up to three years unless extended, developers can confidently take on new projects without fear of additional costs or delays.

Having a clear timeline and understanding of the regulatory landscape reduces the risks associated with planning and executing a new development project. At a time of housing shortages and rising prices in Maryland, creating clearer and more efficient pathways to build is a vital step toward expanding the state's housing supply without state funding or market intervention.

Housing production goals

Creating housing production goals at all levels of government can encourage housing production, but should be done carefully. The rules for residential development are typically made and



enforced on the local level, and unfortunately, this is where many of the regulatory bottlenecks are. Having clear housing goals at the state level can help hold local governments accountable for maintaining development-friendly and property-rights-focused laws, which sometimes receive backlash at the local level.

That said, the state should avoid becoming overly focused on setting housing production targets at the expense of advancing meaningful, housing-friendly reforms and responding to local needs. While goals can provide direction, real progress depends on maintaining a clear and predictable regulatory environment that allows housing of all types to move forward. When that framework is in place, the market is best positioned to determine where and how much housing is needed.

Any production target system should be carefully calibrated to encourage local action without creating unnecessary bureaucracy.

Clear design standards

Establishing clear project design guidelines for affordable housing is another vital step toward a predictable and operationally efficient regulatory landscape. Creating a pre-approval permit application specifically for standardized model home designs and eliminating redundant plan reviews can help Maryland shorten the permitting timeline and get families into homes more efficiently.

Again, these efforts to streamline permitting and housing production will actively address the state's affordable housing shortage and price pressure.

Policy adaptation for Maryland:

SB 267 offers a balanced approach to addressing Maryland's housing shortage. By improving the permitting process and orienting local governments to prioritize housing production, this bill strategically targets bottlenecks and reduces unnecessary procedural barriers.

We respectfully urge the General Assembly to advance SB 267 to ensure that Maryland can foster a development-friendly environment and meet the growing housing needs of its residents in a timely manner.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Eliza Terziev
Policy Analyst
Reason Foundation
eliza.terziev@reason.org

