

Committee: Finance; Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB389– Land Use-Transit Oriented Development – Alterations (Maryland Transit and Housing Opportunity Act)
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 17, 2026

Dear Chairs Beidle and Feldman and Committee Members:

I have resided in Bethesda (D16) for several years. I am concerned about the high cost of transportation and housing for many residents. Transit-oriented development addresses both of those concerns.

Land is a limited resource. Maryland should constantly be evaluating the land it owns to ensure that it is being devoted wisely to address public needs. Often the state can lead the way to encourage the public sector to follow.

Designating certain transit-oriented development areas on state owned land as enterprise zones will provide improved financing opportunities for increasing housing close to rail transit stations. Modifying the timing of certain development excise taxes and impact fees and requiring certain changes to local zoning and parking regulations on residential real estate covered by this bill will also be beneficial.

I recently toured a new mixed use residential building close to a Purple Line station soon to open near Connecticut Avenue in Montgomery County. Already units are being occupied and surrounding small businesses are developing and thriving. While I do not think this particular unit was located on state-owned land, it shows the tremendous opportunity for residential and commercial development on state owned land near other rail transit stops. SB389 will take advantage of state owned land close to rail stations to address the high cost of housing and transit for at least some Maryland residents.

For these reasons, I urge you to issue a FAVORABLE report on SB389, the Transit and Housing Opportunity Act.