



House Bill 705

Land Use - Reporting - Annual Reports and Development of New Housing

MACo Position:

Letter of Information

Date: February 22, 2022

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) respectfully submits this **LETTER OF INFORMATION** on HB 705.

Starting in July 2023, this bill would mandate that county planning departments submit a yearly housing report to the Department of Planning. County reports must include: the number of building permits issued, the types of dwelling units created, the total number of family dwelling units created, and the number of projects where construction has begun. The department is required to then issue a yearly report on the state of Maryland's housing starting in October 2023.

The administrative burden of compiling and submitting the information required under HB 705 is likely material but did not drive MACo to oppose the bill on those grounds. The need and eventual use for the envisioned report is not readily clear.

Historically, the General Assembly has also played an essential role in enabling the sensible growth of Maryland's communities. State legislation has helped to set a broad vision, with the community-level execution left to local decision-makers. Counties are concerned that the proposed information-gathering mandates represent a potential prelude to more comprehensive legislative action that may eventually be at odds with each jurisdiction's locally driven land use planning structure. One-size-fits-all solutions rarely turn out to be an appropriate answer to complex problems.

One of the hallmarks of Maryland's political system is the balance between broad vision-setting in Annapolis and community-minded decisions made at the local level. Gathering of information to illustrate the proposals and priorities of the building community may serve a purpose, but any follow-through should continue to respect this important balance.