

HOUSE BILL 489

E4, C9

5lr2071
CF 5lr2072

By: **Delegate Stewart**

Introduced and read first time: January 20, 2025

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Department of Labor – Study on Building Code Requirements for**
3 **Single–Staircase Buildings**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Department of Labor to study and make
5 recommendations regarding building code requirements for single–staircase
6 buildings; and generally relating to building code requirements for single–staircase
7 buildings.

8 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
9 That:

10 (a) In this section, “Department” means the Maryland Department of Labor.

11 (b) The Department shall:

12 (1) conduct a study on building code requirements for single–staircase
13 buildings in the State and other states; and

14 (2) make recommendations regarding potential legislative or regulatory
15 changes to authorize the construction of single–staircase buildings up to six stories above
16 grade plane in the State for the purpose of increasing the affordable housing supply by
17 reducing barriers to multifamily housing development.

18 (c) The study shall:

19 (1) survey and document a representative sampling of state and local laws,
20 ordinances, and policies from across North America;

21 (2) analyze best practices for state and local governments when drafting
22 building code requirements for single–staircase buildings up to six stories above grade,
23 taking into consideration the following factors:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- 1 (i) the availability of an adequate water supply;
- 2 (ii) the presence and response capability of a professional fire
3 department;
- 4 (iii) the practicability or feasibility of compliance with modern fire
5 codes, including a comparison to the safety of the existing housing supply;
- 6 (iv) the practicability or feasibility of building in urban or infill
7 settings;
- 8 (v) the viability of redevelopment or adaptive reuse of historic
9 properties;
- 10 (vi) any impacts of laws, ordinances, or policies on:
- 11 1. housing development; or
- 12 2. the cost of housing; and
- 13 (vii) any other relevant factors, as determined by the Department;
14 and
- 15 (3) make legislative and regulatory recommendations, including potential
16 amendments to the Maryland Building Performance Standards, to authorize the
17 construction of single-staircase buildings up to six stories above grade plane in the State
18 for the purpose of increasing the affordable housing supply by reducing barriers to
19 multifamily housing development.

20 (d) In carrying out the study, the Department shall consult with:

- 21 (1) a fire engineer who is a faculty member at a public institution of higher
22 education that has a fire protection program; and
- 23 (2) a representative of a union that represents firefighters.

24 (e) On or before December 1, 2025, the Department shall report its findings and
25 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
26 Government Article, the General Assembly, the Senate Education, Energy, and the
27 Environment Committee, and the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

28 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
29 1, 2025.