



Maryland Legislative Action Committee
The Legislative Voice of Maryland Community Association Homeowners

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February 18, 2021

Hon. Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chairman
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 686 Real Property – Condominiums, Homeowners Association, and Cooperative Housing Corporations – Virtual Meetings

Hearing: February 24, 2021

**Position: Support with Amendment making it
Emergency Legislation**

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Action Committee (“MD-LAC”) of the Community Associations Institute (“CAI”). CAI represents individuals and professionals who reside in or work with condominiums, homeowners associations and cooperatives throughout the State of Maryland.

I am writing today on behalf of the MD-LAC to voice our support for SB 686 with an amendment making it emergency legislation effective upon signature by Governor Hogan.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, most condominiums, homeowners associations and cooperatives have conducted their meetings virtually through Zoom and other similar platforms in order to comply with governmental restrictions on large gatherings and social distancing. What started as a forced action has turned into a real positive for these community associations. Specifically, community association have experienced increased member participation in meetings, reduced

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costs of conducting meetings, and flexibility in scheduling and sharing materials during the meetings.

Right now, there are still some associations that are holding off conducting their annual meetings and elections due to the pandemic restrictions. These associations are looking for guidance and would greatly benefit from having the virtual meeting process prescribed by law. This is the goal of SB 686. For this reason, the MD-LAC requests an amendment to SB 686 to make it emergency legislation effective as soon as possible.

Notwithstanding the urgency surrounding this issue, the MD-LAC views SB 686 as more than a temporary law. While it is anticipated that governmental restrictions will require continued use of virtual meetings by community associations for the next several months, there will be an end to the emergency at some point. Even when the pandemic is over, community associations will continue to benefit from being authorized to hold virtual meetings. The way business is conducted has changed in the past year and the MD-LAC urges Maryland to be in the forefront in recognizing this fact and permanently amending the laws impacting community associations to allow for virtual meetings. Both Virginia and the District of Columbia have already adopted emergency legislation allowing virtual meetings for condominiums and other community associations during the pandemic. Maryland would be the first to make this type of legislation permanent.

We are available to answer any questions which you may have. Please feel free to contact any of the individuals listed: Lisa Harris Jones, CAI MD-LAC lobbyist, at 410-366-1500 or by email at lisa.jones@mdlobbyist.com; or Charlene Morazzani Hood, PCAM®, Executive Vice President/Community Manager/Vice Chair CAI MD-LAC, at 410-654-4444 or by email at cmorazzani@residential-realty.com; or Steven Randol, Chair 410-695-2183, or srandol@pineyorchard.com

Sincerely,

Julianne Dymowski, Esquire
Member MD-LAC
Community Associations Institute

CAI is a national organization dedicated to fostering vibrant, competent, harmonious community associations for more than thirty years. Its members include community association volunteer leaders, professional managers, community management firms, and other professionals and companies that provide products and services to common interest associations. As part of its mission, CAI advocates for legislative and regulatory policies that support responsible governance and effective management. As part of this purpose state Legislative Action Committees represent CAI members before state legislatures and agencies on issues such as governance, assessments collection, insurance and construction defects.

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