



Testimony SB 744
Environment and Transportation Committee
March 29, 2022
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

SB 744 would require the Department of Planning to provide a list of excess real property owned by the State to the Department of Housing and Community Development; requiring the Department to determine whether any of the listed properties are suitable for use or redevelopment as affordable housing; and requiring units of State government to develop proposals to donate or sell excess real property determined to be suitable for use or redevelopment as affordable housing.

According to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment that was completed in 2021 by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, Maryland will have to make a significant investment in housing over the next 10 years in order to keep up with economic and demographic shifts in the state. The analysis showed that the state is short 85,000 rental units for low-income households. With Maryland expected to add an estimated 97,166 low-income households by 2030, the shortage will worsen unless the state creates and preserves many more affordable homes. Thirteen of the state's 23 counties and Baltimore City don't have enough housing that's affordable to very low-income renters. The deficit is largest in Montgomery County, followed by Baltimore.

Ensuring that all families live in affordable, stable homes will improve community health outcomes, thereby reducing health care and education costs. This is an urgent priority for an equitable recovery from the pandemic. Building a firm foundation for stable homes begins with policies that provide opportunities for families to afford to rent or buy decent homes necessary for good health. Given the health, educational, and cost implications of families living in unstable homes, there is an urgent need to increase supply of affordable homes.

As long as the Maryland economy needs essential jobs that pay \$25 per hour or less, we will have to have housing that is affordable for families making those wages. It is urgent that the state work toward these strategies now. As we put off these decisions, the cost of building and preserving affordable housing in Maryland only grows more expensive.

We ask your favorable report for SB 744.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director