

February 22, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Environment & Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251,  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD, 21401

**RE: MBIA Letter of Opposition HB 631 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**

Dear Chairman Barve:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **HB 631 Natural Resources - Land Conservation - Establishment of Goals and Programs (Maryland the Beautiful Act)**. MBIA **Opposes** the Act in its current version.

This bill would establish a trust fund and incentive program for the state to spend money buying land for the purposes of preventing development and incentivizing landowners to forgo development. MBIA opposes this measure. While maintaining natural resources are important, it is reckless to create a committee specifically designated to preventing any state development and handing them 10 million dollars to make land purchases for no functional purpose. The representatives on the board require no academic or professional expertise in land development, forest conservation, project management, environmental impact analysis or any other relevant field required to make this proposal tenable.

Additionally, this committee would be targeted at lands that are currently eligible to be developed under Maryland Law, which is already a small portion of the state's landmass. This bill takes no regard for human habitation and needs. According to Freddie Mac and the National Realtors Association, Maryland currently has a 120,000 housing unit deficit. This number is growing under current state policies having risen there from an estimated 82,000 unit deficit in 2021. It is reckless and irresponsible to create a new entity for the sole purpose of diminishing the already desperately needed developable land in order to meet the massive housing shortfall that is only growing a regulations new initiative make it more expensive and more difficult to find places to build these needed homes.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or [lgraf@marylandbuilders.org](mailto:lgraf@marylandbuilders.org).

cc: Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee