



CALVERT COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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February 13, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama, Chair
Economic Matters Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB0548 – Maryland Housing Certainty Act

Dear Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian and Committee Members:

The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) writes in **opposition** to **House Bill 548**.

The BOCC recognizes Maryland's need to expand housing options and improve predictability in the development process, HB 548 shifts significant operational, fiscal and enforcement burdens onto local governments without addressing the practical realities of reviewing and servicing new residential growth.

1) Extending vesting to five years reduces local flexibility and increases risks

HB 548 extends project vesting from three to five years, effectively "freezing" applicable standards for an extended period. A five-year vesting window:

- Locks in outdated standards even when local jurisdictions update requirements to address changing conditions (public safety, stormwater, flooding, environmental protections, transportation safety, school capacity, etc.).
- Undermines comprehensive planning by limiting the ability of elected officials to respond to infrastructure constraints or evolving community needs.
- Creates inequity among applicants, as projects submitted earlier would avoid updated rules that newer applicants must follow.

2) Shortened review timelines create an unfunded mandate and threatens quality review

HB 548 cuts residential review timelines by approximately half. While timely decisions are important, residential development review requires coordination across multiple disciplines and agencies, including planning, engineering, traffic, stormwater, utilities, environmental review, fire and life safety, legal and often school and parks impact analysis. Halving timelines will:

- Require additional staffing, overtime or reallocation of limited resources, creating ongoing costs to local governments.
- Increase the risk of incomplete or rushed reviews, which can lead to avoidable design errors, safety issues and downstream disputes.
- Increase the likelihood of appeals and litigation by reducing opportunities to resolve technical issues collaboratively before a decision is issued.

If the General Assembly wishes to impose substantially shorter statutory review periods, it should also provide State funding and/or allow reasonable flexibility for application completeness, interagency review and

resubmittals. Otherwise, the burden shifts directly to local taxpayers.

3) Delaying impact fee collection creates enforcement and planning problems and shifts costs to residents

HB 548 would delay the collection of certain development impact fees (and similar charges) until final approval or completion. This raises serious concerns:

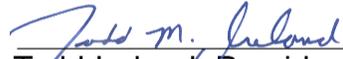
- **Enforcement risk:** delayed collection increases the likelihood of non-payment, project transfers, corporate dissolutions or disputes late in the process.
- **Cash-flow and capital planning impacts:** impact fees help fund infrastructure needed to serve growth (roads, schools, water/sewer capacity, stormwater facilities, parks, etc.). Delaying collection means new residents may occupy homes before adequate infrastructure can be funded or constructed.
- **Cost shifting:** when fees are delayed or harder to collect, local governments must bridge funding gaps, often through general fund dollars or debt, effectively shifting growth-related costs to existing residents.

If the intent is to reduce upfront costs to developers, more workable approaches exist (e.g., structured installment schedules with enforceable security such as bonding or escrow) that preserve the jurisdiction's ability to ensure collection and plan infrastructure responsibly.

For these reasons, the BOCC respectfully urges the committee to consider the impacts of this legislation and request an unfavorable report.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss these concerns further, please contact Planning & Zoning Director Jason Brinkley at 410-535-1600, ext. 2334.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND



Todd Ireland, President



Mark C. Cox Sr., Vice President



Catherine M. Grasso



Earl F. Hance



Mike Hart