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Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2003
Assigned to: Environmental Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Study Commission on Housing Policy**

3 FOR the purpose of creating the Study Commission on Housing Policy; providing for
4 the membership, appointment, chairman, and staffing of the Commission;
5 requiring the Commission to hold meetings and hearings under certain
6 circumstances; requiring the Commission to perform certain duties and
7 functions relating to housing policy; requiring the Commission to report to the
8 General Assembly and certain other units on or before certain dates; providing
9 for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Study Commission
10 on Housing Policy.

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
12 MARYLAND, That:

13 (a) There is a Study Commission on Housing Policy.

14 (b) The Commission consists of the following members:

15 (1) two members from the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker
16 of the House;

17 (2) two members from the Senate of Maryland, appointed by President of
18 the Senate;

19 (3) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the
20 Secretary's designee;

21 (4) two representatives of local government, appointed one each by the
22 Maryland Association of Counties and the Maryland Municipal League;

23 (5) one representative of local agencies that implement housing
24 programs, who has direct housing development experience, appointed by the
25 Secretary of Housing and Community Development;

1 (6) one representative of home builders, appointed by the Home Builders
2 Association of Maryland;

3 (7) two representatives of affordable housing advocacy organizations
4 reflecting different regions of the State, appointed by the Secretary of Housing and
5 Community Development; and

6 (8) one representative from each of the following entities or groups,
7 appointed by the Secretary of Housing and Community Development:

8 (i) the Maryland Association of Realtors;

9 (ii) a banking or lending institution;

10 (iii) a community development corporation;

11 (iv) a nonprofit affordable housing developer; and

12 (v) tenants or a tenant organization.

13 (c) (1) In making appointments, the Speaker and the President shall
14 provide for representation from:

15 (i) the committees that deal with issues affecting housing; and

16 (ii) the major areas of the State.

17 (2) (i) A member appointed by the Speaker serves at the pleasure of
18 the Speaker.

19 (ii) A member appointed by the President serves at the pleasure of
20 the President.

21 (3) (i) If a vacancy occurs among the Delegates on the Commission,
22 the Speaker shall promptly appoint a successor.

23 (ii) If a vacancy occurs among the Senators on the Commission, the
24 President shall promptly appoint a successor.

25 (d) Members of the Commission shall be appointed by August 1, 2003.

26 (e) (1) From among the membership of the Commission, the Secretary of
27 Housing and Community Development shall appoint one individual to serve as
28 chairman of the Commission.

29 (2) A majority of the full authorized membership of the Commission is a
30 quorum.

31 (3) The Department of Housing and Community Development shall
32 provide staff assistance to the Commission.

1 (f) The Commission shall hold:

2 (1) an organizational meeting within one month after the appointment of
3 its members; and

4 (2) any other meetings that the Commission considers necessary to carry
5 out its duties efficiently.

6 (g) The Commission shall hold hearings in various areas of the State to
7 receive public testimony on Maryland's housing and community development needs
8 and the success of current policies and programs in meeting these needs.

9 (h) In addition to any powers and duties set forth elsewhere, the Commission
10 shall:

11 (1) investigate the problems relating to housing policy in Maryland, with
12 an emphasis both on the difficulties of developing and promoting public policies
13 affecting affordable housing and community development and on preventing sprawl,
14 including:

15 (i) the availability of affordable housing for families of limited
16 income, moderate income, the elderly, and the disabled;

17 (ii) the rehabilitation of older apartments while avoiding
18 displacement of established residents and maintaining rent affordability;

19 (iii) the development of affordable housing in areas where property
20 value is high and land is scarce;

21 (iv) the various means to encourage local rezoning to enable areas of
22 greater population density and the development of a greater mix of housing types;
23 and

24 (v) the availability of resources to educate tenants and homeowners
25 of their respective rights and responsibilities;

26 (2) investigate local and State policies, such as Montgomery County's
27 moderately priced dwelling unit program, that have succeeded at creating stable,
28 mixed income communities, and report on the following:

29 (i) the strengths and weaknesses of these policies;

30 (ii) comparisons between communities developed under these
31 policies and other communities with regard to crime rates, property value
32 appreciation, availability of public services, school quality, and overall quality of life;

33 (iii) the potential applicability of those policies to other areas of the
34 State; and

1 (iv) changes in current State policies and programs and new State
2 initiatives that would be needed to support local efforts to foster stable mixed income
3 communities;

4 (3) develop a statewide typology, or set of categories of different types of
5 communities, for the application and allocation of State housing and community
6 development programs and resources to reflect the diverse range of conditions and
7 needs across the State and ensure that the appropriate resources are available and
8 used to address the right problems, taking into consideration the following factors:

9 (i) income levels and concentrations of poverty;

10 (ii) appropriate density levels and housing types;

11 (iii) planned rates of growth;

12 (iv) levels of housing abandonment;

13 (v) jobs and housing mix;

14 (vi) availability of affordable housing;

15 (vii) school capacity and performance;

16 (viii) need for historic preservation resources; and

17 (ix) need for commercial revitalization;

18 (4) collect and evaluate information on legislative proposals, regulatory
19 changes, and trends that affect affordable housing, community development, and fair
20 housing;

21 (5) identify State policies and actions that, in conjunction with public
22 and private partners and with support of communities, can work to improve housing
23 conditions in the State;

24 (6) review and make recommendations to align State laws, regulations,
25 programs, services, and budgetary priorities with the State policies and actions in
26 place or proposed by the Commission;

27 (7) search for any interdepartmental gaps, inconsistencies, and
28 inefficiencies in the implementation or attainment of the State policies and actions
29 described in item (3) of this subsection;

30 (8) serve as an informational resource for the General Assembly on
31 legislative policy matters concerning housing; and

32 (9) perform other activities, including improving public awareness of the
33 issues relating to housing policy.

1 (i) (1) Subject to § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the Commission
2 shall submit an interim report to the Secretary of Housing and Community
3 Development, the General Assembly, and the Governor on or before April 1, 2004.

4 (2) Subject to § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the Commission
5 shall submit a final report to the General Assembly and the Governor on or before
6 December 1, 2004.

7 (3) The interim and final reports shall include:

8 (i) a description of the progress and any findings of the
9 Commission; and

10 (ii) any recommendations of the Commission.

11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take
12 effect June 1, 2003. It shall remain effective for a period of 19 months and, at the end
13 of December 31, 2004, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
14 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.