



House Bill 1199

Real Property – County Rental Property Licenses – Requirements and Limits

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: March 3, 2020

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 1199 as it sets burdensome, costly, and unnecessary requirements on county housing policy.

Counties put considerable efforts towards ensuring their housing stock meets local needs and goals. Local housing policy is often collaboratively developed as part of comprehensive master plans with public feedback to make certain housing availability is equitable, affordable, and safe. This bill eschews all that local planning and consideration.

HB 1199 would require counties to establish a licensing program for single-family dwelling units operated as residential rental property. Licenses for these properties must be capped at 15% of all the single-family dwelling units in the county.

Counties believe these statewide requirements are arbitrarily established without consideration of local housing policies or needs. They may also result in an artificial limit on rental housing availability and subsequently raise rental costs.

Additionally, the requirements in the bill are burdensome in that they would impose substantial costs and obligations on counties that do not currently operate rental licensing programs. Those counties would require additional administrative staff and inspectors to oversee the properties in addition to other costs to set up the framework to operate such a program. Furthermore, in counties that already have a rental licensing program, the bill unnecessarily preempts local authority to manage rental housing properties as they have already deemed fit and appropriate for their communities.

HB 1199 imposes substantial costly and needless limitations on local housing policies. For these reasons, MACo urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 1199.