



**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIVISION**

**COUNTY AGENCY LEGISLATIVE COMMENT REQUEST FORM**

**Reviewing Agency:** Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

**Bill/Resolution Number:** CB-51-2020

**Brief Summary of the Bill/Resolution:**

For the purpose of ensuring safe, sustainable and inclusive living housing options for all county residents regardless of ability, functionality, stature, age, stability, in a safe sustainable, universally designed environment.

**Agency Impact:**

*Will this bill impact your Agency financially or operationally, or your Agency's mission?*

Yes     No     Undeterminable at this time

*If yes, please select the appropriate impact:*     Positive Impact     Negative Impact     No Impact

**Discussion of Impact:**

If enacted this bill will have cost implications that could hinder the development and preservation of affordable housing in Prince George's County. While many of the requirements make a home more livable for all, such as door handles instead of knobs, others could be quite expensive, especially requirements for side-by-side washer/dryers, wider hallways, door entrances, and requirements for wheelchair turning radiuses in kitchens and bathrooms. These requirements will require significantly more square footage. Requiring a ground floor bedroom could also be impossible for certain townhome designs, and I think Universal Design would require elevators for any low-rise multifamily as it has to be 100% accessible.

Affordable housing developers compete with all jurisdiction in the state for LIHTCs, therefore they need to meet MD CDA's cost containment rules which limit construction costs per sq. ft. Prince George's County LITHC deals are already at a disadvantage because it is a higher cost area, and projects are competing with the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland. Also keep in mind that Prince George's already has stringent requirements on exterior finishes, such as requiring brick or hardiboard and minimizing vinyl siding which increase the costs of development. Adding Universal Design will add to the construction costs in this county, which no one else in the State has to meet. In addition, some Universal Design products are not standard, such as the washer/dryers, and will likely be more expensive.

**Fiscal Impact:**

*Please provide an estimate of the financial impact. For example, will this bill require you to hire more staff, create a computer system, etc.?*

**Agency Position Recommendation:**

Support     Oppose     Support with Amendments     No position

*Please specify any suggested amendments in the space below?*

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**Additional Information:**

*Has your agency been contacted by the State Department of Legislative Services staff regarding this proposal?*

Yes     No

*If yes, please provide comments about the discussion.*

**Contact:**     **Estella Alexander, Director, DHCD**

**Date:**        **October 6, 2020**