

May 20, 2025

Hon. Rueben Collins  
President, Charles County Board of Commissioners  
200 Baltimore Street  
La Plata, MD 20646

Re: Opposition to Recordation Tax Increase

The Maryland Building Industry Association representing over 1,000 member companies statewide, with a significant amount active in Charles County is submitting testimony in opposition to the proposed recordation tax increase. Maryland is in the midst of a major housing crisis from both an affordability and inventory standpoint. Due to supply shortages and the state's failure to lower regulatory burdens on builders, a majority of renters say they are cost-burdened with housing-related expenses.

I would start by noting that state budget included a new fee to access land records remotely. The fee is \$.020 per page to just view not download, to give context on average our members will view anywhere from 100 to 500 pages per day. We are working with the administration to find a more reasonable solution but this would add massive costs to the process. The average sold price of a home last month in Charles County was \$495,000. Under the current recordation tax, the buyers – AND the sellers -- would likely be sharing the cost of close to \$5,000. Under the proposed change, that same buyer and seller would be required to pay almost \$7,000, which is almost a \$2,000 increase.

With the housing market already under so much pressure in our region specifically, this tax directly makes housing more unaffordable, discourages homeownership, and ultimately harms your constituents and your long-term potential tax revenues. The county has made it a priority to bring down the cost of new houses, the industry has met the board and this has been a consistent message that homes are too expensive. The proposal being heard today will do the exact opposite, only exacerbating prices and limiting new home availability.

This targeted and inequitable tax creates even more major barriers to homeownership in Charles County. We are already burdened with some of the highest property taxes, transfer taxes, and recordation taxes in the country. Not to mention how this proposed tax disproportionately impacts the very people we say we want to help—those trying to put down roots, build wealth, and contribute to our community.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback, and would ask the body to instead seek alternatives to increasing revenues through retaining and attracting new investment. We again oppose any increase to the recordation tax and would urge the Board of Commissioners not to adopt this proposal.

Thank you,

*Griffin Benton*

Griffin Benton, VP Government Affairs

