

MARYLAND MATTERS

‘Vesting rights’ bill heads to governor’s desk, his other housing bills less certain

Transit-oriented development hits labor agreement snag; ‘Silver and Starter Homes’ was a non-starter

BY: [DANIELLE J. BROWN](#)-APRIL 11, 2026 8:02 AM



Housing Secretary Jake Day, Gov. Wes Moore, and [Kenneth Naylor with Atlantic Pacific Companies](#), discuss future development in the Capitol Heights area near its Metro station in January. An early start on housing discussions was credited with the administration's agenda. (Photo by Danielle J. Brown/Maryland Matters)

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Lawmakers gave final approval Friday to part of Gov. Wes Moore's (D) package of housing reform bills, but another ran into a last-minute snag between chambers while a third languished in committee without a vote, all but dead with the end of the legislative session looming Monday.

The House on Friday approved [Senate Bill 325](#), the Maryland Housing Certainty Act, on a 106-29 vote. Not long after, the Senate voted 34-12 for a companion version of the bill, [House Bill 548](#).

The bills, which are now on the governor's desk awaiting his signature, delay the payment of certain fees to county officials for the development of new housing and create "vesting rights" for developers: The assurance that a project would be subject to the local regulations in place at time of its completed application and not subject to later changes.

A similar vesting rights bill died last year as time ran out on the session. "Lots have been written about our housing affordability and supply challenge caused by a [shortage of 100,000 units](#)," said Sen. Brian J. Feldman (D-Montgomery), the chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, during a news conference Friday morning.

"One of the biggest issues identified is the need in our state for more regulatory certainty," Feldman said, referencing the Housing Certainty Act. "Developers need to know that the laws and regulations governing permitting aren't going to be changed years after the project gets started." The Housing Certainty Act is just one piece of the 3-pronged housing package in Moore's legislative priorities this year. But the other parts aren't progressing as smoothly: one piece hit an unexpected snag in the final days of session, while the other has languished in committee for weeks.

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Housing officials say developers are often deterred or unable to finish housing projects because they have to adapt to new building requirements in the middle of construction.

In 2025, the governor’s vesting rights proposal was aimed to tie housing development to areas with high job growth. That came under fire from the Maryland Association of Counties, because it limited county government say over some housing decisions. MACo Executive Director Michael Sanderson said conversations on vesting rights “fell apart” in the waning days of the 2025 legislative session.

This year, the administration got out ahead of the issue, with Housing Secretary Jake Day and state officials increasing efforts to coordinate with counties on the legislation. Those efforts appeared to pay off: Sanderson said that in listening to early discussion on the bill this year, he was more certain that any disagreements were “going to get worked out quickly” this year.

“It’s done and we’re fine,” Sanderson said.

Other components of Moore’s package aren’t faring as well.

Road bumps for transit-oriented bill

A Moore proposal to encourage development around areas of high transit had been progressing smoothly – until recently, when lawmakers differed over labor language in the Maryland Transit and Housing Opportunity Act.

The administration bill included language calling for project labor agreements, or PLAs, collective bargaining agreements between a project developer and labor unions to establish the terms for employment on a project. Developers looking to apply for the state’s Transit-Oriented

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Development Capital Grant and Revolving Loan Fund would get a boost if the project included a PLA, under Moore's proposed legislation.

The Senate stripped the PLA language out of [Senate Bill 389](#) and passed the amended version unanimously back in March, just days after the House approved [House Bill 894](#) with the PLA language intact.

Otherwise, the bills are largely the same and would encourage new housing development around transit-oriented locations by restricting parking minimums and other local decisions in specific situations. The bills also prohibit the collection of certain county taxes until a project is close to completion.

But neither chamber has yielded on its position the PLA language, with each amending the other's bill to conform to its own.

The House could approve the Senate bill, with PLA language, on Saturday. The Senate will likely vote on the House bill, with the PLA language stripped out, on Monday, the last day of session.

Silver and Starter Homes a non-starter

A part of the governor's package aimed at encouraging the development of smaller homes by prohibiting local jurisdictions from placing restrictions on how small a lot or house could be, has languished in committee since February in both chambers, where they are expected to die.

The Starter and Silver Homes Act – [House Bill 239](#) and [Senate Bill 36](#) – both had committee hearings in February, but have not moved since.

Of the governor's three housing proposals, the Silver and Starter Homes act brought out the most testimony from the public, many of whom opposed the matter.

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“The central idea of the bill was that apartments and townhomes were suitable in all residential areas,” Sanderson said. “It really served as a lightning rod.”

Sanderson noted it’s the first year for the Starter/Silver Homes proposal, and many bills do not pass in the first year they are introduced.

While it’s not impossible for the bill to make great strides between now and Monday, Feldman previously said that his committee focused on passing Moore’s other two housing bills, and was not prioritizing the Silver and Starter Homes bill.

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