

SUPPORT HB 594

Topic: Enables local governments to implement an expedited approval process to develop affordable housing when the project meets specific requirements, including location efficiency criteria.

Bill Patron: Delegate Simonds

OVERVIEW:

Allows a locality, by ordinance, to authorize a zoning administrator to use an administrative process to approve rezoning applications for affordable housing developments. The bill requires that the affordable housing development comply with the Virginia Fair Housing Law, connect to a public or community water supply or sewage system, and be located within or adjacent to an area identified by the locality that could support increased density development and provide access to services.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- Virginia currently has a shortage of 300,000 affordable homes, in part due to the costly and unpredictable nature of local discretionary development processes.
- Due to this lack of supply, average rents in Virginia have skyrocketed over 19% since 2020. These increases are felt most by households at the lowest incomes.
- For every 100 households at 50% AMI or less, only 52 affordable rental units are available in Virginia. For every 100 households at 30% or less AMI, there are only 33 affordable units. The state is in severe need of more committed affordable housing, and current local regulations are not producing it at a rate fast enough to keep pace with demand.
- This bill would speed up the approval process for increased density and decrease uncertainty surrounding the development process of much-needed affordable housing.
- This bill concentrates increased density in areas the locality has already identified as being able to support additional units.
- This is an enabling bill that does not require localities to adopt this specific tool for adding affordable housing.



Coalition for Smarter Growth

DC • MD • VA

Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director
stewart@smartergrowth.net
703-599-6437



Virginia Conservation Network
Fatima Kamara, Land Use & Transportation
Campaign & Policy Manager
fatima@vcnva.org
Fatima: (757) 309-6647

This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.