



April 23, 2023

Montgomery County Sierra Club  
P.O. Box 4024  
Rockville, MD 20849

Council Member Evan Glass  
President of Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Glass and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

Since the pandemic rent cap was allowed to expire, evictions have skyrocketed. There are now roughly 300 eviction cases per month in front of our District Court. To help working class and low-income people stay in their homes, we *strongly support the Housing Opportunity, Mobility and Equity (HOME) Act, Bill 16-23*, which will cap rent increases at 3% a year.

The Sierra Club is concerned both about the supply of affordable housing and the protection of the remaining green space in our county. We believe the HOME Act will advance both goals. One way to provide housing without promoting more sprawl is to help people stay in their homes, and make maximum use of what is already built. We support provisions in the act to impose an excise tax on units held vacant, to promote fuller use of existing housing stock. If rents rise much faster than they can afford, families are faced with impossible choices. They may be forced to move much further away from their jobs, adding to the economic and environmental cost of transportation, and the challenges of child care. The impacts of climate change in the form of floods, heat emergencies and pollution will also fall hardest on those with the least financial means.

If we want working families to be able to stay in Montgomery County, we need to help them out by passing the HOME Act. Please do.

Sincerely,

Darian Unger  
Chair, Montgomery County Sierra Club  
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