



January 24, 2020

The Honorable Lynwood W. Lewis  
Senate of Virginia  
Pocahontas Building, Room E609  
900 East Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Chair Lewis,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce strongly opposes SB 839, permitting local governments to require developers to enter into binding labor contracts as a condition of certain developments by special exception site plan. Since last week's committee hearing, a number of our members representing a variety of industries have reached out to the Chamber with concerns that this bill could inhibit commercial and housing development in Virginia. We respectfully ask that this bill be passed by for the year.

SB 839 extends land use policy tools to labor market issues. Site plan conditions are project-specific, so each project could have its own labor environment. Moreover, local planning and zoning staff who draft and enforce site plan conditions are not experts in labor law and supervision, complicating any implementation or enforcement.

Establishing such a piecemeal approach to labor regulation would add both burdens and uncertainty to new projects. Virginia would be less competitive than neighboring jurisdictions with more certain development environments. We could lose out on opportunities to expand our housing stock. If enacted, this legislation also risks undermining the economic development that we seek from site plan projects.

We believe that there are other, more constructive, ways to address labor concerns and to ensure that all workers are appropriately treated and compensated for the work they do without risking commercial and housing development in Virginia. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates  
President & CEO

CC: Senate Committee on Local Government members; Arlington County Senate delegation