

Testimony to the Senate Budget and Taxation  
SB 273 - National Capital Strategic Economic Development Program – Authorized Uses

Position: Favorable

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Good afternoon Mister Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chris Gillis and I'm testifying on behalf of MHP to urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 273.

By way of background, MHP is a non-profit affordable housing provider with apartment communities located throughout Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

As the committee knows, the National Capital Strategic Economic Development Fund, or NED, supports residential and commercial neighborhood revitalization activities in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. NED is critical to ensuring that we maintain a diverse mix of affordable housing options in high-cost jurisdictions and to positioning small businesses to survive and thrive in today's economy.

Most recently, MHP has received NED funding to support the production or rehab of affordable housing in North Bethesda, Wheaton, and Takoma Park, as well as funding for the restoration of a blighted historic building in the Long Branch neighborhood of Silver Spring.

In the 2021 session, the General Assembly passed legislation that expanded the eligibility areas for the program in both Montgomery and Prince George's County; however, during conference committee, a sunset provision was attached to the expanded area in Montgomery County. SB 273 is a technical change that would eliminate the sunset and make the eligibility changes permanent. Without this legislation, the eligibility area would revert back to neighborhoods only within the Capital Beltway in Montgomery County. As a result, affordable housing and community development projects from Montgomery County would be severely disadvantaged because many of the neighborhoods that are most in need of investment in the County are outside the Capital Beltway. This legislation ensures that we are directing state funding to where it is most needed in Montgomery and Prince George's County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.