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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY BRANCH**

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February 20, 2023

Dear Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, and Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates Adrienne A. Jones

Bill No. 460 -Department of Housing and Community Development – Racial Equity Impact Assessment

Sponsored By: Delegates Taylor, Allen, Charkoudian, Charles, Fair, Grossman, Harris, Henson, Holmes, Ivey, J. Long, Taveras, and Toles Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2023

I am Linda Thornton Thomas, president of the Prince George’s County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). I am presenting this testimony on behalf of more than 1,500 members residing or working in Prince George’s County.

As President of the NAACP, it astonishes me this year, 2023, that we are encouraged to implement a racial impact assessment in Maryland. As a civil rights organization, we have been seeking to provide and support sustainable and livable communities for years. However, we have recently filed complaints with landlords, investors, assessors, and developers regarding housing issues. This discrimination should not occur in any state because there is an obligation to all parties in this industry to practice equity and fairness under the AFFH (fair housing) as outlined in Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

Our efforts have been continuous but have yet to be entirely successful for those who have been traditionally marginalized from the community planning process. This Bill has provided new insight into the disparate burdens and loss of revenue experienced by different groups across the region. In addition, a Racial Equity Impact Assessment is needed and should be accessible and completed yearly. This Bill would ensure everyone will be treated fairly regardless of race, color, or religion.

House Bill 460 would put parties in this industry on notice and will increase the opportunities for residents and businesses to assist state agencies in determining the culprits’ violating laws, policies, and regulations. This Bill is greatly needed and would strengthen the case for individuals who have been discriminated against in this industry.

Thank you for allowing us this opportunity to share our reason for supporting this, Bill.
With Regards,

Linda Thornton Thomas, President

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