



HB 460
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 21, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all neighborhoods are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 460 - Would require the Department of Housing and Community Development, to complete a racial equity impact assessment evaluating the impact of financial assistance administered by the Department and whether the assistance is equitably invested in the communities with the greatest need and those with the largest population of economically marginalized peoples; and requiring the Department to work with independent experts on the assessment and to make the assessment available to the public.

Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of their social determinants of health, including access to health care, education, employment, economic stability, housing, public safety, and neighborhood and environmental factors, which are deeply impacted by systemic racism. A broad body of research has quantified the existence of health disparities, including a greater risk of heart disease, stroke, infant mortality, maternal mortality, lower birth weight, obesity, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cancers, respiratory diseases, and autoimmune diseases.

In the last five years, there has been a lot of discussion about the need to use a racial equity lens in all decision making at the Department of Housing and Community Development. This was raised by members of the Maryland General Assembly as well as stakeholders in the development of the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment process in 2019 and 2020. Stakeholders stressed that all actions, including the creation or expansion of local resources for housing, need to focus on addressing disparities in the state, tailoring local resources to residents' needs. They highlighted racial equity assessment tools and racial equity impact statements as ways to integrate a racial equity lens into decision making.

We respectfully request a FAVORABLE report on HB 460.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director