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**Written Testimony**

**HB150 - Housing and Community Development - Adaptive Reuse  
Environment and Transportation Committee – February 7, 2023**

**Support**

**Background:** House Bill 150 would allow financial assistance from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to be used for retrofitting and repurposing existing buildings, thus developing new, affordable multifamily housing.

**Written Comments:** The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes Comprehensive Housing Assistance Inc. (CHAI), a housing and community development agency that promotes stable communities for Jewish residents and their neighbors in Northwest Baltimore and other designated areas. Their many projects help create and maintain affordable housing; improve public spaces; encourage neighborhood investment; and enhance quality of life.

The need for affordable housing is far-reaching. Maryland has one of the highest rates of poverty in the country, with almost 50% of those being considered as living in *deep* poverty. Additionally, pandemic-related inflation has driven the cost of building supplies up astronomically. By allowing for retrofitting of existing buildings to create multifamily housing using loans from DHCD, we are both investing in our communities and revitalizing current infrastructure. Simply put, utilizing another avenue to establish housing through programs that already exist will put us one step closer to meeting the needs of low-income Marylanders across the state.

**For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB150.**

*The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*