

February 12, 2026

Chair Kriselda Valderrama  
House Economic Matters Committee  
230 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB47/HB235 – Housing and Community Development - Neighborhood Business Development Program - Local Approval Requirement

Dear Chair Valderrama and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Fello, we write in support of ***SB47/HB235 – Housing and Community Development - Neighborhood Business Development Program - Local Approval Requirement.***

Across Maryland, Fello is building communities where people belong. With a team of more than 650 employees, Fello supports over 5,000 people with disabilities each year – creating opportunities that empower people to live the lives they choose. From advancing equity and respect to expanding access and connection, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. One powerful way this comes to life is through Fello Communities: beautiful, safe, and accessible rental housing that offers choice and stability for residents across income levels, from affordable to market-rate homes.

SB47/HB235 would modernize Maryland’s Neighborhood Business Development Program by removing the requirement that local governments formally approve applications before the Department of Housing and Community Development can approve loans or grants under the program. This change would streamline the application process, reduce delays, and help small businesses, nonprofits, and microenterprises access funding more quickly. By making the program more responsive, SB47/HB235 would support economic development, community revitalization, and job creation, particularly in underserved areas, while helping locally rooted enterprises thrive and advancing the state’s economic and community development goals.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB47/HB235.

Sincerely,



**Jonathon Rondeau**  
President & CEO

**fello.**

**fello.org**

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