



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **Senate Bill 85**

Maryland Neighborhood Revitalization Funding

**DATE: JANUARY 21, 2020**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

### **POSITION**

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 85 from the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Budget and Taxation Committees. Adequate funding for community revitalization has been identified as critical to realize the full potential of Maryland's smart growth strategy. SB 85 would invest in equitable economic development across the state to address barriers unique to revitalization and development in smart growth areas.

### **COMMENTS**

Maryland law establishes a goal to "increase the current percentage of growth inside the priority funding areas and to decrease the percentage of growth located outside the priority funding areas." (Md. Code Ann., Land Use, § 1-208 (b)(2)(i)). Achieving and maintaining progress toward this goal is an important part of the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint, as revitalization and redevelopment activity improves water quality conditions in urban areas and reduce the detrimental effects of sprawling growth.

While existing financial incentives and sound land use planning encourage revitalization of smart growth areas across the State, the Maryland State Data Center reports that Maryland has made insufficient progress redirecting development since smart growth policies were first enacted by the General Assembly in 1997.

Inadequate funding has long been identified as a primary challenge in achieving the State's goals for growth. A recent survey by the National Center for Smart Growth confirmed that a "lack of infrastructure" is a leading constraint to development in smart growth areas from inner city neighborhoods to rural main streets across Maryland.

SB 85 provides dedicated capital to improve residential and commercial prospects in existing communities across the state. Specifically, this bill would ensure an investment of at least \$250M to recover blighted housing, improve commercial districts, and rebuild infrastructure. Recognizing that smart growth areas exist in every Maryland county, SB 85 provides for geographically diverse distributions of funds, helping address key barriers to achieving State land use and water quality goals.

### **CONCLUSION**

For these reasons, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation recommends a favorable report on SB 85 from the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Budget and Taxation Committees. For questions or more information, please contact Erik Fisher, MD Land Use Planner, at 443-482-2096 or [efisher@cbf.org](mailto:efisher@cbf.org).

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