



Testimony HB 472 –

Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act Funding

February 11, 2019

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Barve and the Members of the House Environment & Transportation:

We urge this committee to vote a favorable report for HB 472 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding HB 472 creates a permanent funding source for the Community Development Fund which was created during the 2018 legislative session. The funding will be critical operating dollars to use for community development organizations to apply for affordable housing, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, housing and financial counseling, small business development, community services, and more. The funding source is \$5 million from surplus of the Unclaimed Property Fund.

MRDC works to move those experiencing poverty in Rural Maryland into self-sufficiency. We receive a Community Services Block Grant, which allows us to set up a framework of our strategic mission. Aside from that grant (which is less than four percent of our annual budget, we are locked into many grants which do not allow for operating funding. They are pass through grants that allow our communities and families to receive aid, but we have no way of funding our staff to facilitate those pass-through or even find eligible families. A fully funded Community Development Fund would allow us to access the money to put our other grants to more effective use.

Please vote a favorable report for HB 472

Respectfully Submitted: Chris Benzing, Executive Director