



**Testimony HB 867
Appropriations Committee
February 12, 2021
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair McIntosh and the Members of the Appropriations 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 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 867 extends the requirement for an annual appropriation of \$12,000,000 in the State budget for the Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative (BRNI) Program Fund through fiscal year 2026.

In the past two years, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development made available \$12 million in BRNI funds for nonprofit community development organizations. Each year, there have been applications of more than \$20 million in requests. These projects are important in leveraging philanthropic and private investment.

BRNI funds are a vital capital investment for Baltimore's community development industry. The program has funded partners throughout the city and helped them to complete projects throughout the city. The program's structure helps partners remain accountable to the community as well as the Department of Housing and Community Development. We have seen BRNI funds used to fund housing as well as community infrastructure. BRNI projects include programs in central Baltimore city as well as Southeast and Southwest parts of the city. This includes projects with theaters, schools, office space, community centers as well as housing projects.

We hope that you will continue this investment in Baltimore City revitalization through 2026.

We respectfully request a favorable report for HB 867.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network of Maryland