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TO: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
RE: House Bill 0655 – Requesting a Favorable Report
DATE: March 13, 2021

Testimony

Lexington Park is one of two development districts in rural St. Mary's County. Leonardtown has its own government run by a Mayor. Lexington Park is a more urbanized area without a civic agency committed to its oversight. Rampant crime, vacant buildings, and crumbling infrastructure display its neglect.

Naval Air Station Patuxent River is St. Mary's largest employer with 22,000 workers: contributing over \$7.5 billion to the economy of Maryland. Directly outside its gates is Lexington Park.

There is no representation of government that is directly beholding to these urban needs. There is no one to explain that blight allowed to overtake the county's major commercial district impacts every taxpayer.

HB 655 addresses this deficit.

This is not a partisan issue. It is not about the performance of this or any past board of county commissioners.

Population and development patterns dilute Lexington Park's voice. Yet the consequences of neglect keep growing – for every St. Mary's County taxpayer.

It is overdue to address these issues with representation.

St. Mary's County Community Development Corp. – a nonprofit – was founded in 1985 mostly to acquire state and federal grants to patch-up problems in Lexington Park. That hasn't been enough.

We support direct representation of Lexington Park in county government as a needed step toward restoring this community's safety, health, and property value.

We ask for a favorable report.

Board of Directors
St. Mary's County Community Development Corp.