



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

SENATE BILL 699 -- BALTIMORE REGIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE PROGRAM FUND

Sponsor – Senator McCray

February 23, 2021

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 699, which extends the sunset on the mandated \$12 million annual appropriation to the Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative Program Fund from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2026.

The program allows the state to make strategic investments in local housing and businesses, which can lead to healthy, sustainable communities with a growing tax base and enhanced quality of life. The program attempts to focus on areas where modest investment and a coordinated strategy will have an appreciable neighborhood revitalization impact.

Community Development Organizations with an approved strategic neighborhood revitalization plan may apply for Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative funding for projects located in Sustainable Community Areas in Baltimore City and the inner beltway of Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties. Cross-jurisdictional partnerships are eligible and encouraged.

The GBC *2021 Maryland General Assembly Legislative Priorities* advocates for policy, funding, and regulatory solutions to accelerate economic recovery with an emphasis on support for small and minority-owned business. The funding extension of this proven program will enable the state to continue funding the housing and business needs in some of our state's most vulnerable communities.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 867.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 66-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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