



James Torrence, J.D.
Seventh District,
Baltimore City Council

100 Holliday Street, Room 521, Baltimore Maryland 21202 | Phone: 410-396-4810

Dear Honorable Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee:

RE: House Bill 1293 – Baltimore City – West North Avenue Development Authority

Good afternoon, Mister Chair and the honorable committee members. As member of the Baltimore City Council, I am writing in support of House Bill 1293 – Baltimore City – West North Avenue Development Authority. This legislation, sponsored by Delegate Marlon Amprey, establishes the West North Avenue Development Authority for the purpose of developing a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy for the benefit of the “target area” and “buffer zone” in Baltimore City. This is an opportunity for meaningful social and economic progress in communities devastated by the collateral consequences of disinvestment and redlining.

I am delighted that this bill allows the authority to receive donated services from accountants, lawyers, or other consultants as necessary to carry out the authority’s duties. This power will permit the authority to conduct rigorous analysis of complex social and economic issues in these communities and to seek strategic advice and technical assistance from policymakers, philanthropists, and other mission driven practitioners to foster promising ideas that expand opportunities for all. In addition, this power is essential to the authority’s obligation to coordinate with area residents in supporting the development and approval of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan in the target area and the buffer zone which benefits residents; housing; neighborhoods; economic development; and transportation.

Maryland can assist West Baltimoreans in turning the corner on historic divestment and the legacy of redlining by approving this tool to achieve thriving, more equitable communities. This legislation affords an approach necessary for authentic community planning and comprehensive engagement to counter disinvestment. Ideally, this authority will spur the development and implementation of place-based neighborhood revitalization initiatives within my council district.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I respectfully ask the committee to render a favorable report for House Bill 1293.

Sincerely,

James Torrence, Councilmember – District 7