



Town of Sykesville

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Town House

Ian Shaw, Mayor
Joe Cosentini, Town Manager
Craig Weaver, Treasurer
Kerry G. Chaney, Town Clerk

March 1, 2021

Re: **Testimony** – Economic and Community Development Income Tax Credit for Catalytic Revitalization Projects

Honorable Member's,

As a Mayor of a small-town, one of the most important things we can do in our community is to celebrate our history. The Town of Sykesville and the Warfield complex have been tied together since the late 1800's when the facility was founded as the Springfield State Hospital. This facility once provided employment, housing and recreation opportunities for our community members and, with your help, can again be a contributing part of Sykesville's success. The current approved plan for a mixed use economic development project benefiting the Town, County and State continue to be one of our top priorities to restore this site to its former glory.

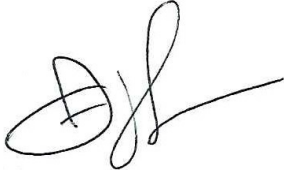
For over 20 years now, our Town staff and Elected Officials have been trying to appropriately redevelop this formerly State owned property into a project we all could be proud of. As with most large scale development projects, projected costs are always a concern. In historic revitalization projects this problem is even more pronounced. Warfield is no exception. The Town of Sykesville took ownership of this property in 2001, and we quickly realized why the State was eager to surplus the property. While we are grateful still for the opportunity, the State transferred many of its responsibilities in regards to environmental hazard mitigation at the site to the Town. The property consists of over a dozen historic structures, three of which have been renovated and house active commercial enterprises while two others were repurposed for the State Police and Correctional Training Commission.

Success stories are possible, but time is running out on the remaining buildings and additional funding and government support are needed to make the rest of the property as successful as those previous efforts. The property was sold in 2018 to a private developer with one of the primary goals being to facilitate these remaining renovations. Unfortunately, State resources such as the current Historic Tax Credit Program are simply not sufficient enough or not structured adequately to benefit a large scale rehabilitation effort.

The proposed catalytic program is capable of providing tax credit funding that will be helpful in moving the needle towards project feasibility by bridging some of those financial gaps the State would have had to address at some point had ownership not been transferred. Our community's goal is to have these structures rehabilitated to a historic standard and put back into functional service. This bill can be one of the vehicles to assist the current developer in these efforts. Once successful, the results will be additional tax dollars to further our State and local priorities which center on supporting our local economy and providing resources that will allow our small businesses to grow and flourish.

The Town looks forward to working with the developers and the State in ensuring the historic restoration of these buildings. We are excited at the potential that the catalytic tax credit has and are hopeful that Warfield will be a model of success for other properties across the State.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Shaw', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian Shaw, Mayor
Town of Sykesville