



CUMBERLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
60 Pershing Street, Cumberland, MD 21502  
(301) 722-4173

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser , Chair  
House Ways and Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 131  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 1144 – Economic Development – Western Maryland Economic Future Investment Board  
and Fund – Establishment

Dear Chairwoman Kaiser:

The Cumberland Economic Development Corporation respectfully requests the House Ways and Means Committee give a **Favorable Report** to House Bill 1144 – Economic Development – Western Maryland Economic Future investment Board and Fund – Establishment.

Since 2010, Western Maryland's (Washington, Allegany and Garrett Counties) population has declined .9% while the State of Maryland's population has grown 4.4%. The population of those aged 35 – 44 has declined over 15% in the region. While the number of businesses in Maryland has increased by 3.7%, Western Maryland has seen a decrease of 3.5%. Additionally, average wages in Western Maryland are below the State average, \$41,205 versus \$60,499.

Breaking the cycle of declining population and negative employment shock can be very difficult. The Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland has recommended a number of initiatives designed to reverse recent trends in population and economic decline in the western most part of the State. House Bill 1144, establishing the Western Maryland Economic Future Investment Board and Fund, is a critical piece of the Task Force's overall strategy to attract business from outside the region, grow existing business, increase population and broaden the tax base making Western Maryland a positive contributor to the success of the great State of Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew B. Miller  
Executive Director  
Cumberland Economic Development Corporation

Cc: Honorable Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair, House Ways and Means Committee  
House Ways and Means Committee Members  
Western Maryland Delegation