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## **Testimony SB294**

### **Ways and Means Committee**

**Dr. Carl Roberts, BDC Chairman**  
**Steve Cassard, BDC Executive Director**

Madame Chair and members of the committee, on behalf of the Bainbridge Development Corporation, we respectfully provide written testimony in **support of Senate Bill 294** sponsored by Senators Gallion, Hershey and Peters.

By way of background, the Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) was created in 1999 by the Maryland General Assembly to develop and implement a dynamic, sustainable plan for the former Naval Training Center at Bainbridge, with the objective to transfer the 1,185-acre site into productive use by the public and/or private sector. To accomplish this goal, the BDC is managed by an Executive Director and governed by a 15-member Board of Directors. The BDC operates various internal committees to support the critical elements and activities of the Corporation, including, communications, environmental, real estate, and historical preservation. To address technical activities, the BDC utilizes various contractors, consultants, and subject-matter experts.

In 2004, BDC entered into a developer agreement with MTPM, a team lead by Ken Michael, which has invested over \$23 million since 2005 to overcome the challenges to developing this site. BDC operations are funded almost entirely by an annual contribution from MTPM – therefore BDC does not rely on state funding.

The first challenge confronting BDC and MTPM over the past two decades has been addressing the adverse environmental conditions on site left over from the from United States Naval Base which was closed in 1976. MTPM's initial plans for mixed use development were halted in 2010 when several pervasive contaminants were discovered across the site, within the soil. Several years later, the Environmental Protection Agency increased the acceptable levels of these contaminants, thus shifting the environmental response to the Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) discovered in 2017. The Navy tested a 400-acre portion of the site and has negotiated an Environmental Services Cooperative Agreement (ESCA) with BDC effective September 2019 committing \$4MM in federal funds to address the ACM concurrently during initial site development. The asbestos abatement must be completed by August 2022, when the federal funds expire. Clearing and grading work by MTPM is now underway with MDE forecasting that

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*Carl Roberts, Chair    Jim Reynolds, Vice Chair    Chick Hamm, Treasurer*

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the site will receive a no-further action letter by summer provided land use controls limiting the site to commercial/industrial development are recorded in the deed.

The second challenge was the lack of public infrastructure serving the site. There are no sewer connections to the property, and the Port Deposit wastewater treatment plant was at the end of its useful life. Cecil county is now building a new treatment plant that will be operational later this year, and the County and State have plans for a 2-mile public sewer line to connect to the new plant.

The final challenge are the high costs of on-site infrastructure and the need for private investment to fully develop the site. The existing infrastructure is unsalvageable. MTPM is working with a development prospect that forecasts building upwards of 4 million square feet of commercial/industrial facilities representing over \$320 million of investment for the 422-acre Phase 1. This has the potential of creating 1,500 jobs and over \$8 million in annual state and local tax revenue. Phase 2 could sustain another 3.5 million square feet of development.

The BDC Board has never been closer to achieving its mission of putting the Bainbridge into productive use, but the timing is critical. We appreciate the support of the Delegation for a much-needed incentive to proceed with site development and, more importantly, to attract quality tenants that bring jobs and taxes to a long dormant area of Cecil County.

The redevelopment of Bainbridge not only benefits the Town of Port Deposit and Cecil County, but it is also of regional and statewide economic importance given the scale of the project. We appreciate your consideration and request the support of the Committee and a favorable report on **Senate Bill 294**.

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