



**Testimony SB 557
Finance Committee
March 15, 2022
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairperson Kelly and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities.

SB 557 Authorizes Baltimore County to exercise powers to acquire, develop or redevelop, and dispose of certain land or property located in West Baltimore County for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes; authorizing the County Executive and County Council of Baltimore County to establish, by law, the West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority and to delegate certain powers to the Authority to acquire, develop, redevelop, or dispose of certain land or property located in West Baltimore County for certain purposes; etc.

A redevelopment authority in West Baltimore County would help to coordinate efforts to revitalize and preserve targeted communities with an emphasis on communities near and within the Beltway in support of County priorities for community development, transit-oriented development, and affordable housing.

The West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority would have a variety of tools and funding opportunities for the betterment of the community. In other parts of the state, redevelopment authorities contribute to the creation of a diverse and vibrant economy and living environment using community building techniques and provide responsible and responsive development and redevelopment that is designed to enhance quality of life, balanced growth and job creation for diverse sustainable communities. Further, these entities decrease the number of blighted commercial and residential structures and improve the quality of life for residents.

We ask that the committee issue a favorable report on SB 557.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network