

SHANEKA HENSON
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Ways and Means Committee

Joint Committee on
Children, Youth, and Families



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 10, 2023

Chair Ben Barnes
Vice Chair Mark S. Chang
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB838: Community Development Program Act – Funding.

The Community Development Fund was created by the General Assembly in 2018 to offer financial assistance, including operating grants, to community development projects and community development organizations around the state. For many years the state has provided capital resources through programs such as Community Legacy, Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative, the National Capital Strategic Economic Development Fund (NED), and Project Core. However, without providing corresponding operating funds to support the investments, community development groups across the state have struggled to complete projects. The Community Development Fund is designed to help remedy this.

Unfortunately, the Community Development Fund has remained unfunded since its creation in 2018. This bill seeks an annual appropriation of \$5M for the Fund with revenue from the abandoned property fund which generates over \$95M annually from the sale of abandoned personal property in Maryland. The Fund is to be administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development with assistance from an appointed board.

This funding is critical as we work to support historically marginalized communities by reducing disparities in housing, health, economic development, and education. Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report on HB838.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaneka Henson".

Delegate Shaneka Henson