



Testimony

**HB 838 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding**

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

**March 14, 2023**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

HB838 creates a permanent funding source for the Community Development Fund which was created in 2018. The funding is critical operating dollars for community-based organizations to use for affordable housing, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, housing and financial counseling, small business development, community services, and more.

We are seeking \$5 million from the Unclaimed Property Fund after usual disbursements have been made.

Bon Secours Community Works (BSCW) works to enrich West Baltimore communities with programs, services, and affordable housing that contribute to the long-term economic and social viability of neighborhoods. BSCW owns and operates affordable housing; develops parks and urban farms; delivers proven job training programs; delivers financial empowerment services; implements after school youth programs; operates an Early Head Start program; and provides many other services that are driven by community expressed priorities in West Baltimore. Sustaining the operations and growth of our programs, in particular our affordable housing is essential to meeting the needs of the disinvested community that we serve.

General operating support is the working capital that we need to sustain our day-to-day operations. The rise of costs in the last two years has had a significant impact on our ability to sustain operations and continue to meet the needs of our community, like increased access to affordable housing, crime, illegal dumping, vacant lot improvement, quality education, and career advancement. General operating support from the Community Development Fund would be a capital source that would allow us to continue to serve the needs of the residents of West Baltimore.

Please vote a favorable report for HB838.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George Kleb", written in a cursive style.

George Kleb  
Executive Director  
Bon Secours Community Works

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