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Testimony- SB643- Housing- Community Development Fund Program Act

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BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

March 8, 2023

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

The South Baltimore Community Land Trust urges this committee to vote a favorable report for **SB632 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding**

SB643 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.

The South Baltimore Community Land Trust was founded to promote healthy regenerative communities in South Baltimore through the development of quality permanently affordable housing and a just transition to Zero Waste. The concentration of pollution in South Baltimore has compounding effects like: poverty that comes from disinvestment, poor housing quality, and lack of adequate health care to name a few. It is our mission and goal to help connect community residents with skills and knowledge to tackle these issues. To carry out our mission and vision we need continued operating support. Most grants restrict organizations from getting adequate operating funds. These restrictions and lack of working capital can impede an organization's progress and lead to staff burnout and turnover when there is a constant barrier to maintaining day to day operations.

Please vote for a favorable report for SB643.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Meleny Thomas

*Dr. Meleny Thomas*

SBCLT Executive Director- Development Without Displacement

Email: [Meleny@SBCLT.ORG](mailto:Meleny@SBCLT.ORG)

Phone: 443-902-0161



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