



DRUID HEIGHTS
Community Development Corporation

Druid Heights Community Development Corporation

2140 McCulloh Street Baltimore, Maryland 21217

Testimony

SB 445

Education, Energy and the Environment

Position: Support

FEBRUARY 20, 2022

Dear Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment:

Druid Heights Community Development Corporation (DHCDC) is a community-based, 501 (c)(3) non-profit community development corporation. DHCDC is located in zip code 21217 in Baltimore City, within Census Tract 1403 a designated Urban Renewal Area. Our mission is to cause, encourage and promote community self-empowerment, through the development of economic, educational, employment, and affordable housing opportunities.

SB 445 - Expands the forms of financial assistance available under the Appraisal Gap From Historic Redlining Financial Assistance Program; altering eligibility requirements for projects that may receive financial assistance under the Program; altering the time period when applications may be submitted under the Program; repealing certain restrictions on the amount of financial assistance that may be provided under the Program; etc.

Many communities are historically disinvested black communities across the state that have seen their housing markets decimated and have been unable to attract new residents for home ownership. The key reason that potential investors are reluctant to put money into buying and fixing up houses in these areas throughout the state is because the properties later don't appraise high enough to reflect the improvements. In fact, rehabbed properties often appraise for less than the value of the home plus the improvements, discouraging future buyers to invest in the community.

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation that created a public funding tool to address the stubbornly problematic appraisal gap in historically redlined and disinvested neighborhoods across Maryland. This legislation removes restrictions of the original legislation. This change will assist the Druid Heights community in making sure that there are equitable appraisals within urban communities. As we continue to assist with creating affordable homes for low to moderate income families, stabilizing vacant units and transforming green spaces to eliminate blight in West Baltimore.

JohnDre Jennings, Executive Director