



**Testimony HB 79**  
**House Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**January 31, 2023**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland’s community development sector and serves nearly 180 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. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 79 Establishes the Whole-Home Repairs Program in the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide grants to certain local administering agencies for the purposes of ensuring that owner-occupied and rental units are free of habitability concerns, improving coordination across home repairs programs, and increasing retention in workforce development programs; and establishing the Whole-Home Repairs Fund as a special, non- lapsing fund.

According to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment that was completed in 2021 by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, Maryland will have to make a significant investment in housing over the next 10 years in order to keep up with economic and demographic shifts in the state. The analysis showed that the state is short 85,000 rental units for low-income households. With Maryland expected to add an estimated 97,166 low-income households by 2030, the shortage will worsen unless the state creates and preserves many more affordable homes. Thirteen of the state’s 23 counties and Baltimore City don’t have enough housing that’s affordable to very low-income renters. The deficit is largest in Montgomery County, followed by Baltimore.

Maryland’s older adult population will rise sharply in the next ten years and its rental housing stock is not prepared. Housing Upgrades to Benefit Seniors (HUBS) and similar programs connect seniors to a network of Baltimore organizations with a shared mission of helping adult homeowners age in place. By consolidating the efforts of multiple organizations, HUBS creates efficiencies in referral, intake, and application procedures. The HUBS initiative ensures that clients are matched with the correct services and eliminates redundancies so that a greater number of older adults can live in homes that are safe, healthy, and comfortable. A well coordinated repair program on the state level would be a great tool for networks throughout the state.

We ask your favorable report for HB 79.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director