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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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HB 1026- Prince George's County – Land Use – Development of Neglected Property
Testimony of Maryland State Delegate Deni Taveras
Environment and Transportation Committee
March 14, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Kumar Barve, Vice-Chair Dana Stein, and committee members. It is an honor to be before this esteemed body once again. I am here to ask for your favorable report on HB 1026 as amended by the Prince George's Delegation.

This bill authorizes Prince George's County to exercise powers of eminent domain to acquire neglected, blighted property a quarter of a mile from a designated transit-oriented development or Purple Line station and within a business improvement district, with the goal of redeveloping or revitalizing said property. The bill prohibits the property from being taken without just compensation to the entitled party, as agreed on between the parties, or awarded by a jury.

Infrastructure such as highways, trains, and light rails have been known to be unforgiving of communities of color throughout the country by dividing those who have, with those who have not. Redlining exacerbated poverty extremes throughout the United States as detailed in Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law*. Right here in the State of Maryland, the Beltway achieves this within Prince George's County between the wealthier more-Caucasian community outside the Beltway compared to the concentrated poverty found within communities of color inside the Beltway. More recently, we have also seen dramatic displacement of communities of color due to light rail developments along H St. in DC and San Jose in CA. In extreme cases, we find property owners engaging in benign neglect with the goal of profit-maximizing, resulting in the gentrification of a community by selling to the highest bidder, driving up prices, and making it unaffordable for established residents to age in place.

In closing, Prince George's County needs HB 1026 to have agency in its own growth and revitalization, while providing a way to preserve from and give voice to the community in any future property development. More specifically, HB 1026 will facilitate the implementation of the County's General Plan 2035 and help preserve as many communities as possible along the Purple Line. As such, I humbly ask for your favorable recommendation of HB 1026 as amended by the Prince George's County Delegation.