

Christopher Harrington
Written Testimony: HB 1026
Submitted: March 10, 2023

My name is Christopher Harrington, and I am submitting testimony in support of *HB 1026 - An Act Concerning Prince George's County – Land Use – Development of Neglected Property*. I am writing this as a summary of my remarks and thoughts on the bill.

At the heart of this proposal is the idea that community members should have greater influence over development and redevelopment activities. In 2022, my business partner and I started a company called Community Redevelopment Partners. After years of working in a real estate industry that consistently overlooked, and in many cases ignored the concerns of community members, we knew that development could be done in a better way. We knew that inclusive development means that our neighbors are a catalyst of economic development, rather than an ancillary consideration.

The bill before you is a step in the right direction because it provides community members with more power and authority over development.

This legislation allows Prince George's County to exercise eminent domain for neglected or blighted commercial properties that are designated as transit-oriented development and within an established business improvement district. The bill also outlines several critical issues related to the eminent domain such as:

- eminent domain involves compensation to the property owner to be determined by the jury that will consider the current state of the subject property,
- neglected property is defined as abandoned, blighted, or condemned, and
- it is strictly related to designated transit-oriented development commercial properties within the business improvement district.

I know that the legislative process is an iterative one, and I am hopeful that I can continue to engage the members of this body on how to refine this legislation and others that empower local communities to create the change that they seek.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind Regards,
Christopher E. Harrington