MARLON AMPREY
Legislative District 40
Baltimore City

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Economic Matters Committee

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Amprey in Support of House Bill 627: WNADA, Baltimore City - West North Avenue Development Authority - Membership and Procurement

March 1, 2023

Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The West North Avenue area of Baltimore City is in between two institutions of higher education, Coppin State University and the Maryland Institute College of Art, and in 2021 was understood to have great potential for economic development. HB 1293 passed that year, creating the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) for the purpose of revitalizing the neighborhood and investing in economic development.

In 2022, the WNADA appointed an Executive Director and has worked with more than 20 community and neighborhood organizations to develop a comprehensive plan for West North Avenue to be presented to the assembly on October 1st of this year. They have worked with partners around Baltimore to identify five priority zones for economic development in the area. They have secured $300,000 in funding for projects with more grant funding pending.

House Bill 627 seeks to add the Maryland Secretary of Commerce and the Executive Director of Maryland Economic Development Corporation to the WNADA to ensure smooth acquisition and use of resources. The bill also exempts the WNADA from division 2 of the Maryland Procurement Law to allow the Authority to act with less bureaucratic burden in contracting for professional services and excel the development with parity to that which has occurred in East Baltimore.

As such, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 627.

Respectfully,

Delegate Marlon Amprey
40th Legislative District - MD