



**Testimony HB 898
Ways & Means Committee
February 28, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairperson Atterbeary and Ways and Means Committee Members:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 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 has been part of the ongoing work to reform the process of tax sale in the state since 2016. In 2017, CDN was a lead partner in the Task Force to Study Tax Sales in Maryland. CDN currently serves on the Baltimore City Mayor's Tax Sale Workgroup in Baltimore City.

HB 898 – Increases certain amounts that are used to determine eligibility for property tax credits under the renters' property tax relief program and the homeowners' property tax credit program; and requiring the State Department of Assessments and Taxation to evaluate, as compared to inflation, certain income limitations on eligibility for and the calculation of the tax credits and to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by December 1, 2026, and every 3 years thereafter.

The Homeowners and Renters tax credits are important tools for helping older adults and essential workers from losing their homes to eviction and foreclosure in the state of Maryland. In the past five years, we have seen the benefit of having a full-time ombudsman at the State Department of Assessment and Taxation. Increasing eligibility would allow all jurisdictions to see more people avoid tax sale foreclosure and eviction from their home. So many people has sustained significant loss during the pandemic and efforts to increase supports will have impact on households throughout the state. Any effort to increase understanding of the tax credit's impact would be a win for people facing housing instability and the communities they live in.

We urge your favorable report for HB 898.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network