



SCHOOL OF
**ARCHITECTURE,
PLANNING & PRESERVATION**

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR SMART GROWTH
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

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January 26, 2024

Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 309, which updates the Smart Growth Subcabinet's organizational structure, expands the Subcabinet's charge to address resiliency and equity, and adds the Maryland Department of Emergency Management to the Subcabinet membership. This bill will enhance the Subcabinet's role in responding to the myriad of economic and community development challenges facing Maryland's communities and promoting the effective and efficient protection, conservation and use of Maryland's many natural resources.

As an original ex officio member of the Subcabinet, the National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG) has actively participated in most of the Subcabinet initiatives, including chairing the PlanMaryland workgroup coordinating participation of state agencies, local governments, and various interest groups in the first state development plan. NSGC has seen firsthand how the Subcabinet can be instrumental in making a difference and ensuring well-coordinated, effective policy and program implementation of sustainable growth in Maryland.

Over more than 20 years, NCSG has built a solid foundation of government agency, nonprofit and academic partnerships that have been generative in reimagining smart growth for this region. Further, NCSG has developed initiatives that have the potential to support new approach that centers existing communities – particularly low- and moderate-income residents of color. The Center has leveraged its academic and policy leadership roles to change the regional conversation about the centrality of existing residents in redevelopment and amenities.

We look forward to working with the Sustainable Growth Subcabinet to continue to advance smart and sustainable growth throughout Maryland.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report for Senate Bill 309. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Howell".

Kathryn Howell, PhD
Director, National Center for Smart Growth