

**Testimony  
HB 599  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 20, 2024**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and members of the committee:

For 40 years, Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake (HFHC) has been a catalyst for moving low-income families out of poverty toward more prosperous, stable futures through affordable homeownership. By bringing people together to build homes, communities, and inspire hope, we settled 798 families into energy-efficient, affordable homes with zero-interest mortgages. This positively impacted the lives of more than 3,000 partner family members (more than half of whom are children), involved more than 1,200 volunteers annually and impacted hundreds of other community residents who benefit from safer, more vital communities as homeownership rates increase.

During the next year, Habitat Chesapeake will work on 16 homes, some of them new construction, and rehabilitate properties that stand vacant or abandoned in Baltimore area neighborhoods including Milton-Montford, Sandtown, and Curtis Bay.

We know that homeownership is one of the most effective means for ensuring progress for first-time and first-generation homebuyers. It also provides tremendous benefit for our city and entire state.

We understand that the potential for new sources of funding for financing homebuilding as a welcome addition to the “toolkit” that we have available to us as a State, as developers, as homebuilders. The need to increase our housing supply in Maryland is great, and the means to produce units that will work for a wide range of household AMI is crucial. The establishment of the Maryland Community Investment Corporation will add new means for leveraging dollars to make projects happen and develop units to achieve the goal of increasing housing supply in our state. HFHC has successfully used New Market Tax Credits in the past and looks forward to using them again in the future as long as another entity guarantees the recapture risk and supports our organization with reporting and compliance throughout the entire seven year compliance period.

Our work to ensure affordability for our homeowners, who fall within the 30-80% AMI for the region, is made possible through the support of State and City funding sources and private donations. We understand the benefit of having another funding source available to do the work of building homes. With the need for supply and the need for affordable homes

as high as it is right now, we applaud this effort to create a new funding stream within our state.

We favor enlarging access to affordable homeownership for low- to moderate-income homebuyers as an essential strategy for equitable revitalization. We hope that the Committee will look favorably upon this bill, as it may provide a real solution to some of the consistent problems of housing in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Mike Posko, CEO