



Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Inc.

February 26, 2024

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE:** Senate Bill 1005

Honorable Senator Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

I am the Chief Executive Officer of Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore (NHS). Our organization believes that economic and social justice are a right for all residents and communities. We promote this belief by removing barriers of access to homeownership, helping resident access resources to maintain their homes, and supporting communities historically impacted by systemic disinvestment.

Much of the work of NHS is done in West Baltimore along the North Avenue Corridor. This area has been plagued by decades of disinvestment leading to property and community decay. The recent formation of the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) has brought resources and hope to this community. By working in partnership with WNADA, NHS is actively rehabilitating vacant houses for homeownership. Currently 20 homes are under construction and 14 have been sold to date. These are all located in communities adjacent to North Avenue and are part of the WNADA target area. NHS and its partners at Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation are developing a food hall located at 2636 W. North Ave. adjacent to Coppin State University. Future development on this former lumber yard site will support economic development in the area. Combining commercial and residential development is critical as we bring opportunities for homeownership and local employment to the neighborhood. This ultimately brings hope to the residents. SB1005 provides clarity on the work of WNADA and creates a pathway for greater impact. This is critical as we work to transform this long-neglected portion of Baltimore City. This investment is critical to the entire area.

We ask that the committee provide a *favorable* report on SB1005.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. T. Ellis".

Daniel T. Ellis  
Chief Executive Officer



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