

# Town of Bladensburg

## Council Members

### Ward I

Trina Brown  
Kalisha Dixon



Mayor  
Takisha James

## Council Members

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Marilyn Blount  
Carrol McBryde

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair  
House Ways & Means Committee  
Room 131  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Prince George's County - Economic Development - Independent Innovation Agency of Prince George's County - Establishment PG 402-24**

Madam Chair and Members of the Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Takisha James, and I serve as Mayor of Bladensburg, Maryland. I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of **House Bill 306**. I am writing today on behalf of our Town Council and our nearly 10,000 residents to request your support of this important matter.

The Town of Bladensburg understands that communities that possess a strong economic and small business base are more resilient, safer, can withstand certain societal shocks in a more efficacious manner, and provides stronger ladders of opportunity to residents. Therefore, we have invested in economic development, consulted with our local small business owners about their realities and visions for the future, and have worked to attract the right kind of economic development to our town.

Residents in Bladensburg and broader Prince George's County have shown a penchant for innovation and entrepreneurship. University of Maryland College Park, Bowie State University, and Prince George's Community College have all worked to inspire innovation, support ideas, and make entrepreneurship more accessible. Additionally, this region of our country is ripe with opportunities for startup companies to display new ideas and talent.

Most start up entrepreneurs face challenges and hurdles. But data and history has shown that women and people of color acutely experience less accessibility to capital. Access to capital is vital to start up growth, taking advantage opportunities, and spurring innovation. This disparity in capital allocation not only impacts the individual entrepreneur but the surrounding community as well. Easing disparities allocates opportunities for success to more residents. This allows for communities to grow and for talented entrepreneurs to solve some of our societal problem. That is why HB306 is vital for the growth and future of Prince George's County.

**For these reasons I humbly urge a favorable report on HB306.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Takisha D. James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'J'.

Takisha D. James  
Mayor, Town of Bladensburg