January 17, 2025

Re: Corporations and Associations – Limited Worker Cooperative Associations – Authorization (Maryland Limited Worker Cooperative Association Act)

To Members of the Economic Matters

Sponsors: Delegates Qi and Charkoudian (HB15)

Senator Mary Washington (SB144)- Judicial Committee,

My name is Kimberly Armstrong, and I am one of the founding members of the Baltimore Green Justice Workers Cooperative (BGJWC), alongside Ms. Lynn Pinder. I am writing to express my strong support for HB15/SB144, which seeks to establish clear pathways for the formation of worker-owned businesses across Maryland. This legislation represents an opportunity to attract new businesses and investors to our state while empowering workers and communities.

At BGJWC, we strongly support existing worker-owned cooperatives in Baltimore City, such as Red Emma's (bookstore and coffee shop), Wine Source, and Redman's (grocery store) in Baltimore County, as well as others throughout Maryland. This legislation will facilitate the development of many more such businesses, granting workers greater agency in both their workplaces and their communities.

Our cooperative has benefitted greatly from participating in cooperative training and education. These experiences have allowed us to see the benefits of ownership and collaboration firsthand, and we encourage others in our surrounding communities to explore similar opportunities. Cooperatives foster stability, pride, and a sense of shared purpose that can transform businesses and neighborhoods alike.

Passing HB15/SB144 will strengthen existing laws and expand the benefits of worker-owned enterprises to more Maryland residents. I urge you to vote in favor of this important legislation to advance cooperative efforts and empower our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Armstrong- Founding Member
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Baltimore Green Justice Workers Cooperative

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