



To: Chair Senator Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

From: Bainbridge Development Corporation

Date: February 11, 2025

Subject: **In Favor of SB477**

The Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) is appreciative of Senator Gallion and Senator Hershey sponsoring *Senate Bill 477 – Port of Deposit State Park – Size and Scope*. The members of the Bainbridge Development Corporation Board are in **FAVOR** of this legislation.

The purpose of this proposed legislation is to refine current law that directs *“the Department (DNR) to establish the Port of Deposit State Historical Park as a partnership park that seeks to educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.”* The clear focus of this legislation is to acknowledge the existence of Snow Hill which was a Free Black Community in Port Deposit that existed from the late 1840’s to 1900.

The BDC acknowledges the significance of Snow Hill. The Snow Hill Archaeological Site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since its creation by Maryland law in 1999, the BDC has recognized and respected this historic site and the need to preserve in the public interest.

The BDC looks forward to continuing to work with the Department of Natural Resources to achieve the purpose of this legislation. In addition, the BDC will continue to work with partners including but not limited to the Town of Port Deposit, Cecil County Government, Maryland Historic Trust, the Maryland Department of Commerce, Maryland Department of the Environment, MEDCO and others to fulfill its mission to facilitate the redevelopment of the former Bainbridge Naval Training Center site.

Recently published opposition to this legislation indicates that passing this legislation “would take significant Chesapeake Bay Critical Zone property and leave it vulnerable for continued over-development of our county by outside big business.” This language is not only misleading but false. The BDC is made up of community volunteers nominated by local groups and appointed by the Cecil County Council. The BDC has always and will continue to work with the Town of Port Deposit to seek proposals that properly reuse the property in the best interests of its citizens. The historic treasures of the site will be preserved and highlighted through public access to recreational and civic spaces. The site which sits 200 feet above downtown Port Deposit will be the focal point where citizens can recreate and enjoy the picturesque view of the Susquehanna River at the Head of the Chesapeake Bay.

Board of Directors

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BAINBRIDGE
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We thank the members of the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee and ask them to vote in **FAVOR** of **Senate Bill – 477**.

Do not hesitate to call upon us if we can be of further service to you on this or other legislation during Session 2025.

Carl D. Roberts, Ed. D. – Chair
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