

Robin Truiett-Theodorson
Chairperson | Board of Commissioners


Janet Abrahams
President | Chief Executive Officer



SB 890

February 21, 2025

TO: Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee

FROM: Janet Abrahams, Chief Executive Officer 

RE: SB 890 – Housing and Community Development - Division of Just Communities - Establishment




POSITION: Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) supports Senate Bill 890 – Housing and Community Development - Division of Just Communities – Establishment. Senate Bill 890 Establishes the Division of Just Communities in the Department of Housing and Community Development; transfers the authority to designate an area as a Just Community from the Governor to the Department; and alters the criteria for designating an area as a Just Community.

HABC is Baltimore's largest provider of affordable housing opportunities, serving over 20,000 households (nearly 43,000 individuals) through our Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs. HABC serves low- to extremely low-income families and individuals that consist of some of the city's most vulnerable populations, including those at risk of homelessness, the elderly, persons with disabilities, veterans, and children. Historically, in Baltimore, public housing sites were built in segregated areas of the city with high concentrations of poverty. Generally, in these neighborhoods, there has been and continues to be limited access to quality schools, green space/recreation areas, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, financial institutions, transportation, etc. These areas also have high rates of unemployment and crime, high concentration of poverty and minority populations, and lower life-expectancy rates than in more affluent areas of the city.

Many of our public housing sites are in areas of the city that have suffered from decades of disinvestment, and much of our housing portfolio is aging and becoming obsolete. Therefore, HABC has undertaken several redevelopment projects including the Perkins, Somerset, Old town (PSO) Transformation Plan, Transform Poe and the revitalization of O'Donnell Heights. HABC is also in the process of reviewing and prioritizing redevelopment plans for our remaining public housing sites.

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Annually, HABC has sought state funding from DHCD to move forward with current and future redevelopment efforts. It is our goal to replace and transform our public housing sites into mixed-income communities which includes infrastructure improvements, public safety strategies, and supports services designed to help our families increase economic self-sufficiency and improve educational outcomes.







Prioritizing State funding in areas designated as Just Communities would provide HABC with the opportunity to revitalize our public housing stock without displacing those we serve and the possibility of bringing much needed economic development to these historically neglected neighborhoods.

HABC supports the legislation of Division of Just Communities – Establishment as it will be used to prioritize state funding to increase racial, economic, and health equity in the state and particularly in Baltimore City. We respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 890.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO

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