

Subject: Support SB-477: Preserving Snow Hill's Black History

Dear Delegate, Riley, Jacobs, Arentz, Ghrist

As an African American (Black) voter and resident of Port Deposit in Cecil County, I understand the profound importance of preserving and honoring our history. I urge you to support SB-477, a critical bill to protect Show Hill, one of Maryland's earliest free African American (Black) communities.

Maryland has made commendable strides in recognizing African American (Black) history, yet Cecil County's contributions-particularly in Port Deposit-remain underrepresented. Show Hill is a vital piece of that history, preserving the story of a thriving free African American (Black) community before the Civil War.

SB-477 ensures this legacy is properly recognized and protected. By narrowing the project's scope, the bill allows the state to effectively allocate resources toward preserving Show Hill's historical and archaeological significance, while the Bainbridge Development Corporation as Port Deposit work to preserve and restore the historic Tome School site. This streamlined approach increases the project's likelihood of success and ensures timely preservation.

Beyond Show Hill, Port Deposit seeks to connect this site to a greater narrative of Black history, including the town's Underground Railroad connections, Freeman Hall (a segregated Black primary school), and a church built nearly 300 years ago by those once enslaved. These stories deserve to be told, and SB-477 is a critical step in ensuring they are not lost to time.

Please vote YES on SB-477 to elevate Maryland's African American (Black) history and strengthen heritage preservation efforts in Cecil County.

Thank you for your time consideration.

Sincerely,

Mr. Paul A. & Mrs. Gwendolyn C. La Rue

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