



To: Chair Delegate Korman and Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Bainbridge Development Corporation

Date: February 26, 2025

Subject: **In Favor of HB1184**

The Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) is appreciative of Delegate Reilly, Delegate Arentz, Delegate Jacobs, Delegate Ghrist and Delegate Griffith for sponsoring ***House Bill 1184 – Port of Deposit State Park – Size and Scope***. Seven of the eight members of the Cecil County Delegation to Annapolis are sponsoring ***HB1184/SB477***. The members of the Bainbridge Development Corporation Board are unanimously 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 appreciates 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. Comments that the BDC wants to develop on this historic artifact of Black history are not only false but outright lies.

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.

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 Tome School 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

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the focal point where citizens can recreate and enjoy the picturesque view of the Susquehanna River at the Head of the Chesapeake Bay.

We thank the members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee and ask you to vote in **FAVOR** of *House Bill-1184*.

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

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