

Dear Environmental and Transportation Committee,

I am writing to urge your support for HB-1184, a bill that takes a targeted and strategic approach to preserving Snow Hill, one of Maryland's earliest free Black communities.

As a Black voter who lived in Port Deposit for 42 years and cares deeply about preserving Maryland's Black history, I believe this bill is a smart, necessary step to ensure this vital piece of our state's past is properly recognized and protected. I am a member of Cokesbury United Methodist Church in Port Deposit and have been all my life. I attend service there every Sunday. Many of my family members still reside in Port Deposit. My parents met, got married and are buried in Port Deposit.

By narrowing the project's scope, HB- 1184 allows the state to efficiently allocate its resources toward the historical and archaeological preservation of Snow Hill, while Port Deposit and the Bainbridge Development Corporation move forward with restoring the historic Tome School site using their secured funding. This streamlined approach ensures the preservation efforts can move forward more quickly and effectively.

This bill is about taking action now to safeguard Maryland's history before these sites deteriorate further. Snow Hill is not just a local story—it is a statewide treasure that deserves immediate attention.

I urge you to vote YES on HB-1184 to ensure that Snow Hill's legacy is protected and that Maryland continues to lead in preserving Black history.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Odessa Banks", with a stylized, flowing script.

Odessa Banks
Windsor Mill, Maryland