



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin Anderson | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: January 22, 2025
BILL NO: Senate Bill 4
BILL TITLE: Economic Development - West North Avenue Development Authority – Alterations
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 4 - Economic Development - West North Avenue Development Authority - Alterations

Bill Summary:

This legislation alters the administration and powers of the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA), on which Board the Secretary of Commerce or their designee serves. The bill also creates a special fund to carry out the purposes of WNADA, creates a Board of Directors for WNADA and generally establishes administrative requirements and processes for WNADA. Senate Bill 4 also removes the September 30, 2026 sunset date.

Background:

Chapters 80 and 81, Acts of 2021, established WNADA for the purpose of developing a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy for a specific target area in Baltimore City. WNADA must support the development and approval of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan in the target area and the buffer zone to benefit (1) the residents; (2) housing; (3) neighborhoods; (4) economic development; and (5) transportation, including motor vehicles and pedestrians. WNADA must also work in coordination with the residents of the target area and the buffer zone to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan. WNADA presented its comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy in early 2024.

Rationale:

The Secretary of Commerce currently sits as a member of the West North Avenue Redevelopment Authority and upon passage of Senate Bill 4 will be a member of its Board of Directors. WNADA is a key driver of economic and community development in West North Avenue – a historically important east-west thoroughfare in Baltimore. Continued reinvestment in this area through WNADA is critical to improve the economic health and safety of this corridor in Baltimore, and Senate Bill 4 ensures WNADA has the capacity to do so.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 4.