

January 22, 2025

Testimonial Letter to the Maryland Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Pamela G. Beidle, Chairperson

Thank you Chair Beidle and the Maryland Senate Finance Committee for your support of economic and neighborhood development throughout Maryland. I'm writing to support the House Bill-0258, which supports the continuous support provided by the West North Avenue Development Authority.

We are calling on our State to prioritize resources and support for West Baltimore and the efforts of Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation (BARCO) to work in partnership with the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA).

My name is Leon F. Pinkett, III. I am the Executive Director/CEO of BARCO and have spent 28 years in West Baltimore, where I served publicly in the Mayor's Office and as a City Councilmember representing this district, and privately as a nonprofit real estate development professional. I would like to state for the record that the opinions expressed within this letter are my own.

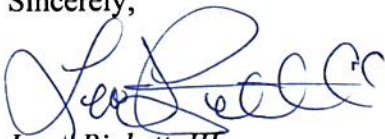
In my experience, I have seen West Baltimore neighborhoods as historically under-resourced, disinvested, and without a consistent economic development strategy from Baltimore City and the State of Maryland. Through the efforts of WNADA, I've been given hope that a more equitable development plan for the City of Baltimore is underway, and I am pleased that the State of Maryland is taking steps to address the years of economic and neighborhood development abandonment that our community has faced.

I urge the committee to support House Bill – 0258 and Senate Bill 4.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this written testimony and the chance to weigh in on policy and the wellbeing of West Baltimore. Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated. I would welcome an opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,



Leon Pinkett, III
CEO + Executive Director
Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation (BARCO)