



ENERGY PARTNERS

January 22, 2025

Testimonial Letter to the House Ways & Means Committee

Chair Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary,

Thank you Chair Atterbeary and the Ways and Means 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. I am a resident of Reservoir Hill in West Baltimore and the founder of Melastone Energy Partners, a company dedicated to advancing clean energy solutions and environmental equity. I strongly urge the committee to grant a favorable vote for the enabling legislation for the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA).

West Baltimore remains one of Maryland's most underinvested areas, where systemic inequities have hindered economic growth and environmental progress. State support through WNADA represents a critical opportunity to address these longstanding disparities by fostering transformative development that benefits both the community and the environment.

At Melastone, we are committed to developing sustainable energy solutions, including solar installations and EV infrastructure, to create clean energy jobs and reduce carbon emissions. We have seen firsthand how access to state resources like those facilitated by WNADA can make these projects viable and impactful, particularly in underserved communities like West Baltimore.

Environmental justice is an essential part of revitalizing West Baltimore. Investing in clean energy infrastructure in the area not only addresses environmental challenges but also helps mitigate the negative health impacts of pollution that disproportionately affect low-income neighborhoods. Through WNADA's vision for economic revitalization, we can drive meaningful progress that benefits all Marylanders.

The enabling legislation for WNADA is more than a policy initiative; it is a pathway to economic empowerment and environmental restoration in a community that has waited far too long for investment and opportunity. As a business leader and resident, I believe that WNADA's work will foster partnerships, attract private investment, and ensure that the development of West Baltimore aligns with the state's commitment to equity and sustainability.

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I respectfully request that the committee provide a favorable report for this legislation, ensuring that WNADA can continue its vital work. Together, we can make West Baltimore a model for inclusive, sustainable development that uplifts its residents and the entire state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Darnell Shaffer

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