



David J. Caporale, President
William R. Atkinson, Commissioner
Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Commissioner
Jason M. Bennett, CPA, Administrator
T. Lee Beeman, Esq, Attorney

February 28, 2025

The Honorable Chair and Members
Ways and Means Committee
Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for House Bill 1459 – Western Maryland Economic Future Investment Board and Senator George C. Edwards Fund – Alterations

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Committee,

As President of the Allegany County Board of County Commissioners, I write to express my strong support for House Bill 1459 and urge a favorable report from the Committee. This legislation plays a vital role in ensuring that Western Maryland, continues to benefit from the economic opportunities and investments that the Senator George C. Edwards Fund has facilitated over the years.

Western Maryland has faced unique economic challenges, and the Senator George C. Edwards Fund has been a critical tool in addressing these issues by supporting infrastructure improvements, business expansion, and job creation. By extending the Fund's appropriations and refining its criteria, HB 1459 will ensure that these essential economic development efforts continue, leading to sustained growth and prosperity in our region.

The Fund has already produced significant positive outcomes for Western Maryland. Over the years, it has helped retain and create jobs, support small businesses, and develop essential capital infrastructure that strengthens our local economy. In Allegany County, these funds were vital to providing support to the Baltimore Street Mall renovation, which saw modernization of multiple buildings into beautiful mixed-use space and an innovative boutique hotel. Our funds have additionally been used to attract bio-tech company Clym Environmental to build their latest expansion in Allegany County Maryland.

In total, it is estimated that **over 1100 jobs have been created in Western Maryland** through projects funded in 2023 and 2024. These grants have **combined with private investments to create over \$290,000,000 in project value** from the funds expended. Extending the Fund's availability and refining its focus to prioritize job creation and economic expansion will further solidify its effectiveness as a driver of progress.

Additionally, Allegany County has greatly benefited from prior investments made through this Fund. These projects have helped to revitalize communities and attract private investment. By ensuring the Fund's continued support, HB 1459 will allow us to build upon this success and keep Western Maryland competitive in attracting businesses and high-quality jobs.

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For these reasons, I strongly support HB 1459 and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions and look forward to working with you to further the economic prosperity of Western Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David J. Caporale".

David J. Caporale

President, Allegany County Board of County Commissioners