



**Testimony
HOUSE BILL 498
House Ways & Means Committee
March 4, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairperson Atterbeary and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 150 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities.

HB 498 - The DECADE Act addresses the state's lagging economic growth by a major restructuring and streamlining of state agencies and programs in this area, including repealing ineffective or duplicative incentives and tax credits. The Housing for Jobs Act is designed to encourage and monitor new housing development in areas where job availability badly outstrips affordable housing opportunities, considering both regional and county level goals.

CDN members provide services to low and moderate-income people and places. Services include developing and managing affordable housing, commercial, and community spaces; supporting local businesses; providing social services; and advocating for and with their communities. CDN supports efforts throughout the state that help more people access homes in communities with abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

We believe that successful community economic development:

1. Begins with a community's history and context
2. Is rooted in racial and social justice
3. Emphasizes a comprehensive role of place
4. Requires long-term commitment.

CDN is particularly hopeful about interagency collaboration and efficiency in this bill. While the Maryland Economic Development Commission has been composed of dedicated public servants focused on the growth of Maryland's economy, it has not proven effective in focusing economic development. An Economic Competitiveness Subcabinet can help to rethink strategies for housing and community development and work on comprehensive economic development strategies.

We urge a favorable report for House Bill 498.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network