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Ways and Means Committee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Testimony: HB1466 Department of Housing and Community Development - Appraisal Gap From Historic Redlining Financial Assistance Program - Qualified Properties
Committee: Economic Matters
Date: March 12, 2026
Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair Valderrama, Vice-Chair Charkoudian, and esteemed members of the Economic Matters Committee. For the record, I am Delegate Greg Wims, presenting HB1466 - Department of Housing and Community Development - Appraisal Gap From Historic Redlining Financial Assistance Program - Qualified Properties.

Under current law, a qualified property for the program must be located in both a low-income census tract and a sustainable community. This bill expands that definition by allowing the Department of Housing and Community Development to identify neighborhoods that have been historically redlined or have undergone urban renewal.

Communities that experienced urban renewal are still dealing with the long-term effects of disinvestment, suppressed property values, and barriers to wealth building. However, because those neighborhoods were changed or reclassified over time, they may no longer fall within a low-income census tract designation. As a result, communities that still face real hardship can be excluded from a program that was created to address appraisal gaps tied to historic inequity.

HB1466 recognizes that a census tract label does not always capture the full situation of a certain area. A neighborhood may appear to have improved statistically, while families and developers there still confront the same market undervaluation and financing barriers that have existed for decades. When that happens, the community can be effectively locked out of assistance even though the underlying need remains.

This bill gives the Department of Housing and Community Development the flexibility to identify those neighborhoods more accurately. It ensures that the program can reach communities whose exclusion is the result of technical designation changes rather than genuine recovery from historic harm. At the same time, the bill keeps the program's core purpose intact. Qualified properties must still be newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated and intended for sale to owner-occupants at an affordable price.

At its heart, HB1466 is about fairness and precision.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on House Bill 1466.