



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

February 17, 2026

Hon. Kriselda Valderrama
Economic Matters Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: HB0461 FAVORABLE

Chairperson Valderrama,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB0461** – a piece of legislation that will establish the Rural Readiness Program and Rural Maryland Capacity Building Fund to be administered by the Rural Maryland Council.

Preservation Maryland is the nonprofit, statewide voice for historic preservation that harnesses the power of historic places by revitalizing and reinvesting in communities, advocating, and building the historic trades workforce for the benefit of all Marylanders. (Learn more at: presmd.org)

This bill will provide assistance to rural communities to enhance their capacity for economic development through the establishment of the Rural Readiness Program. Which will require priority to be given when making certain grants to entities that have completed the Rural Readiness Program. The bill will also establish the Rural Maryland Capacity Building Fund to be administered by the Council to provide grants to support collaborative planning and capacity building initiatives. We support this legislation as we believe its passage would address the needs of the rural communities.

HB0461 is an important piece of legislation, and we urge a favorable report.

Favorable

Sincerely,

Nicholas A. Redding, President & CEO