



To: The Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters Committee
From: Eli Lopatin, Executive Director, Greater Mondawmin Coordinating Council (GMCC)
Date: February 27, 2026
Subject: **FAVORABLE** – HB1276: The WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Act

Distinguished Chair and Members of the Committee,

I serve as the Executive Director of the **Greater Mondawmin Coordinating Council (GMCC)**. We represent a coalition of eight historic neighborhoods in West Baltimore including a large portion of the north side of the West North Avenue corridor. I am writing today to express our full support for **SB0816/HB1276**.

Over the past several years, the **West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA)** has been a transformative partner. The targeted state investments channeled through WNADA have already begun to stabilize our infrastructure and signal to the world that West Baltimore is a place of value and potential.

We have seen the "macro" investments yield results; now, we are asking for the tools to strengthen the "micro"—the social bonds that ensure these physical investments endure.

While large-scale development is essential, the **Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Act** represents the next logical evolution of WNADA's mission. For GMCC and the neighborhood associations we represent, this bill is a game-changer because:

1. This Act empowers neighborhood associations to lead. It acknowledges that those living in our communities are the best experts on what their blocks need to thrive.
2. By providing technical support and grants, the State is ensuring that small, volunteer-led neighborhood groups have the resources to facilitate direct engagement, town halls, and community-building events.
3. Physical development can be fragile without social cohesion. When WNADA supports social connection, it creates a human security system that protects and maintains the state's capital investments.

We look forward to an even closer relationship with WNADA through the implementation of this Act. We envision a future where our member associations are not just beneficiaries of development, but active partners in the social and economic revitalization of their own streets.



GMCC believes that a connected neighbor is an empowered neighbor. This bill turns that belief into a funded, statewide priority.

The Greater Mondawmin Coordinating Council respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE report** on **SB0816** and **HB1276**. We thank the sponsors for their vision and this Committee for its continued investment in the soul of West Baltimore.

Sincerely,

Eli Lopatin
Executive Director
Greater Mondawmin Coordinating Council