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**BILL NO.:**            **SB 953**

**TITLE:**                Housing – Community Development Program Act – Funding

**SPONSOR:**            Senator Sydnor

**COMMITTEE:**        Budget and Taxation

**POSITION:**          **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**                February 28, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 953 – Housing – Community Development Program Act – Funding. This legislation will allocate \$5 million annually to the Community Development Program Fund from the Abandoned Property Fund. The Community Development Program is designed to provide financial assistance, including capital and operating grants, to community development projects and organizations.

These organizations provide and support affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, housing counseling, financial counseling, foreclosure prevention, community organizing, small business development, and community services. Resultingly, SB 953 will provide a direct investment into the betterment of neighborhoods across Baltimore County. The legislation directly identifies the source of the funding, the Abandoned Property Fund, fully funding this initiative.

These community development organizations are often strapped for financial support for their operating expenses. Several programs have been launched recently to provide capital dollars to these organizations. For example, Community Legacy, the Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative, and the Maryland Façade Improvement Program all provide funding for community development capital projects. Alternatively, the funding provided by the Community Development Program will allow organizations to effectively implement community development projects by providing flexible funding that these organizations can use to support their operating costs. The needed development of our communities depends on the State of Maryland and local jurisdictions continuing to collaborate and support these organizations.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 953 from the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).