



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

HB 1266 / SB 754 Support with Amendment

House Appropriations Committee, House Environment and Transportation Committee, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Matters Committee, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

House Hearing: March 7, 2019

Senate Hearing: March 5, 2019

HB 1266 / SB 754: National Capital Strategic Economic Development Program - Established

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The City of Takoma Park supports HB 1266/SB 754, establishing the National Capital Strategic Economic Development Program, but requests two amendments that we believe will better leverage the intent of the bill as we understand it.

House Bill 1266 and Senate Bill 754 provide the City of Takoma Park much needed economic development tools to address the limited and aging housing stock in our City. It also provides support for our small businesses to continue to attract and retain customers as our neighborhoods evolve. The emphasis on affordable housing supports our commitment to keeping Takoma Park a city where residents of varying incomes can benefit from the quality of life that has been established and continues to flourish in our City.

Takoma Park values the diversity in all aspects of community development and we believe that the "Eligible Projects" cited in the bill will support enhancements for public art, residential and commercial property, and spur redevelopment and investment in our strategic development corridor along New Hampshire Avenue. Additionally, the emphasis on workforce development and inclusionary hiring practices will give Takoma Park another tool to expand economic opportunities for our residents through employment partnerships and training programs that require additional operating funds for sector partnership expansion, language connections, and outreach.

In order to best leverage the intent of the bill, the City of Takoma Park would like to see two amendments to the bill. **We request that “government agencies” be restored as an eligible institution for the Program.** In many small municipalities, there are limited community development organizations or organizations with limited capacity to take advantage of the program. Local governments provide much needed project research, existing partnerships, focus, subject matter expertise, leveraged funding, and execution to bring to bear the benefits of a program like National Capital Strategic Economic Development Program.

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(A)(1) A HOUSING AUTHORITY LOCATED IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, AN ENTITY CONTROLLED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY BY A HOUSING AUTHORITY IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, **A GOVERNMENT ENTITY** AND, SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR PROGRAM FUNDS.

As a second amendment, the City of Takoma Park **would like to have “Eligible Projects” to include “programs to renovate and upgrade leased retail space.”** As written, the bill currently includes “Programs to improve existing residential and business *properties*.” This provision supports commercial property owners, but it does not specifically allow small businesses that rent their retail space to have access to funding for much needed renovation improvements such as fixtures, displays, internal systems, and equipment that help to attract and maintain customers. When funding is targeted only to property owners, small businesses that rent their retail space are at the whim of landlords to improve their retail space. By including programs that also support small business commercial property *renters*, you empower small businesses to support their own business growth and development. So, we would propose the following amendment:

Page 4, line 5:

Insert after (3) PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS PROPERTIES, and renumber subsequent projects listed:

(4) PROGRAMS TO RENOVATE AND UPGRADE LEASED RETAIL SPACE;

In sum, the City of Takoma Park supports House Bill 2166 and Senate Bill 754 and urges a favorable report with the amendments proposed above.