



January 27, 2020

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 287
Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

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Thank you for your consideration of SB 287. This legislation creates the Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program, a new capital grant fund that will be administered by the Maryland State Arts Council. The Program has two components - a competitive grant program for large institutions (\$3 m+ budgets) and another one for mid-size to small institutions.

Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.3 billion to the local and state economy, engage over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide over \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues. Many of these organizations provide safe, engaging and welcoming arts spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

While Maryland is 3rd in the nation in per capita spending on the arts, many arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations make the choice to spend on programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are invested on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important community engagement initiatives. As a consequence, these organizations desperately need access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process.

HB 127 provides an equitable path and process for the over 300 arts and culture organizations with critical access to capital funds. In every region of Maryland, we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.

For these reasons, I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB 287.

Respectfully,

Nicholas Cohen
Executive Director