



February 26, 2024

Maryland House of Delegates
Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of HB 741 - Northwest Baltimore County Sports Tourism Facility - Feasibility Study

Chairperson Barnes and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Libber, and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC). I am writing to you today to express MTC's support for House Bill 741. The Maryland Tourism Coalition is a trade organization with members representing all areas of tourism in the State of Maryland. Our mission is to support businesses and organizations that cater to the tourism industry through education, networking, and advocacy. As such, MTC asks the committee to vote in favor of this bill.

MTC strongly supports a feasibility study for a sports tourism facility in Baltimore County. Tourism and specifically sports tourism is a major component of the Maryland economy. When not representing the Maryland Tourism Coalition, I am the Executive Director of the Maryland SoccerPlex in Montgomery County. The Maryland SoccerPlex is the type of facility that could be the recommendation of this feasibility study proposed by this Bill. The Maryland SoccerPlex is responsible for more the \$40mil of direct spending in Montgomery County. Our facility brings in visitors from around the United States and some from overseas to play in events, while staying in hotels, eating in restaurants, shopping in stores, and visiting other entertainment focused businesses during their stay.

Baltimore County is one of the largest jurisdictions in the State but does not currently have the sports facility infrastructure necessary to host some of the large-scale sports tournaments that are looking for host locations. This feasibility study would allow the County and State to identify the type of facility that is needed as well as the size and scope of that venue to meet today's and more importantly tomorrow's need of the market.

The Maryland Stadium Authority has conducted a number of these feasibility studies around the State and have provided excellent evaluations on projects. They have provided unbiased and professional opinions on the viability of projects including several recommendations for when not to build a facility. MTC believes that it is a wise investment to fund the feasibility study to better determine what should be built, as well as if something should be built at all. It is much better to make a small investment now so that money is not wasted building a facility that does not meet the needs of the market.



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The Maryland Tourism Coalition is supportive of the effort to make Maryland a more attractive location for sports tourism events. Baltimore County has potential to be a great location for a new facility and this feasibility study will help make that determination. For these reasons, the Maryland Tourism Coalition asks this committee to vote in favor of this legislation and forward it for a full vote within the House of Delegates of Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Libber
Legislative Chair
Maryland Tourism Coalition
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