



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

February 16, 2024

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB 674 | FAVORABLE

Chairperson Feldman,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB674** – a piece of legislation that will establish a mechanism to fund a Maritime Heritage Grant program.

Why is this Needed? A program like this – *focusing on the history of the Bay* – is critical to the future of Bay restoration efforts because, in the end, “we will conserve only what we love.”* Exhibits, programs, and tours of the Bay inspire understanding, awareness and appreciation and will make a difference for the Bay’s future. Numerous studies have also documented the need for flexible support for these small, often volunteer run organizations that tell Maryland’s maritime story.

Who Supports This? We are also joined in our support by many respected maritime-focused organizations around the state (some of which have also submitted written testimony), including: **the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (St. Michaels), the Maryland Center for History & Culture (Baltimore City), Maryland Humanities (Statewide), the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, Annapolis Maritime Museum and Historic Annapolis, Inc.**

What will the grants support? Currently there is *no dedicated maritime heritage funding* in Maryland and this new fund will address that need. The intent of the legislation is to provide funding to support historic interpretation, programming, events, research, and other difficult to fund non-capital needs at maritime heritage sites within the watershed.

The diversity of Maryland’s maritime story is unique – *and deserves to be told in its entirety*. From maritime museums to lighthouses to sites of indigenous native

cultures, the newly established fund will provide much-needed support to expand public programming and engagement throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. In turn, this will also create new tourism products to market.

Where does the funding come from? The \$250,000 annual appropriation will come from the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund.

How will it be administered? The dedicated fund would be administered by a qualified non-profit organization selected by the Department Natural Resources.

The intent is to establish a program where the nonprofit would make funds available annually through a competitive grant process (vetted by a diverse and professional review panel) to organizations and units of government for maritime heritage and history projects. The nonprofit would report annually on the selected projects and the impact of the funding to the agency. Administration by a partner nonprofit organization selected by DNR, will be a win-win for Maryland's renowned maritime heritage and programmatic efficiency.

It is for these reasons and the positive impact it will have across the state on organizations of all sizes that we offer our full support.

We urge a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Redding
President & CEO

Preservation Maryland is the nonprofit, statewide voice for historic preservation that harnesses the power of historic places by revitalizing and reinvesting in communities, advocating, and building the historic trades workforce for the benefit of all Marylanders. Learn more at: presmd.org

** The full quote from Baba Dioum is: "In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."*