



02/19/2024

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

## **FAVORABLE**

### **SUPPORT FOR ABANDONED OR SUNKEN VESSELS AND WATERWAY IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANTS ACT (SB674)**

As the President & CEO of the Maryland Center for History and Culture, I am writing to offer our support for SB674, which in addition to addressing issues concerning the state's Waterway Improvement Fund and abandoned vessels, also establishes a mechanism to fund a Maritime Heritage Grant program.

#### **PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT DIVERSE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT BAY WATERSHED**

The new Maritime Heritage Grant funding will provide sorely needed support for organizations like ours that are working to interpret and engage the public around the diverse history of the Bay. Currently, there are very few flexible sources of funds for programming and this new fund will address that crucial need.

#### **SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCE & POSITIVE IMPACT ON HERITAGE TOURISM**

The dedicated fund would be administered by a qualified non-profit organization selected by the Department Natural Resources. Funding would then be made available annually through a competitive grant process to organizations and units of government for maritime heritage and history projects. The intent of the legislation is to provide funding to support historic interpretation, programming, events, and research at maritime sites within the watershed. The \$250,000 annual appropriation will come from the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund.

This arrangement, administered by a partner nonprofit organization selected by DNR, is a win-win for Maryland's renowned maritime heritage and history. **We urge a favorable report.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Katie Caljean'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Caljean  
President & CEO  
Maryland Center for History and Culture