



February 29, 2024

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways & Means Committee

Re: House Bill 1281 – Economic Development - Tourism Zones - Designation and Benefits

Position: ***Support***

Chair Atterbeary and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (MDMO), I am writing to express our ***support*** for House Bill 1281 – Economic Development - Tourism Zones - Designation and Benefits. House Bill 1281 would provide important economic growth incentives for tourism across Maryland’s municipalities.

Tourism is an economic ecosystem, delivering opportunity and quality of life for Marylanders that is derived from visitor spending. The travel sector is an integral part of Maryland’s economy and contributes over **\$2 billion** in state and local tax revenues a year. Remaining competitive in our regional market is essential to attracting new and repeat visitors to the State.

By allowing Maryland’s jurisdictions to designate tourism zones and provide tax incentives for businesses in those zones, this bill encourages investment in tourism infrastructure. The tax incentives in House Bill 1281 will make it more financially feasible for businesses to operate tourism venues. This will spur the growth of new hotels, restaurants, entertainment facilities, and other tourism-related establishments. More tourism development translates into more tourists visiting and spending money, which creates a positive ripple effect throughout local economies. For all these reasons, we respectfully request a ***favorable*** report and thank you for your dedicated support to the tourism industry.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cassandra M. Vanhooser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cassandra" being the most prominent.

Cassandra Vanhooser, Chairman
Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations