



## Maryland Municipal League

*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

# TESTIMONY

March 28, 2024

**Committee:** House Ways & Means

**Bill:** SB 14 – Economic Development – Tourism Zones – Designations and Benefits

**Position:** Support

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League strongly supports Senate Bill 14, which enables local jurisdictions to self-designate as Municipal Tourism Zones and provide local incentives to qualifying businesses.

Modeled off a successful program in Virginia, this 2024 MML legislative priority bill would also authorize local governments to provide an array of local tax credits or waivers to businesses that support expanding tourism. This program would not only bolster the ability of jurisdictions to attract and retain community-oriented businesses, especially for those that lack access to other incentive programs it is likely to result in positive returns to the State's general revenue fund and attract new visitors and expenditures in Maryland.

The key difference between this proposal and other programs such as the Arts & Entertainment districts or Main Streets is local flexibility, both to designate the zone and to set qualifications and local incentives. This bill gives all local governments a tool to share their individual unique story.

For these reasons the League respectfully requests that this committee provide Senate Bill 14 with a favorable report.

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