



February 18, 2025

Maryland House of Delegates
The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support of HB1016 - Income Tax - Economic Development - Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority – Established

Chairwoman Atterbeary 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 1016. 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 for a favorable report.

MTC had the privilege of working on the taskforce that was established during the 2024 Legislative Session. Tourism is a major component of Maryland's economy, bringing in \$20.4 billion in direct spending and \$2.5 billion of tax revenue generated. With the impending redevelopment of Harborplace, significant investment in our sports stadiums and the Arena, downtown Baltimore is on the cusp of a renaissance. Our city has the potential to be a top convention destination. A well run and updated Baltimore Convention Center could be a core piece in increasing that economic impact. The convention space is a highly competitive space and Baltimore is currently losing out to big conferences and events that draw tens of thousands of visitors to the city. The last major renovation of the Baltimore Convention Center has not had a major renovations or expansion since the mid-1990s, over thirty years ago. In the meantime, new convention centers have been constructed, and others have been updated with new amenities and spaces that are more attractive to conferences, conventions and events. The new proposed authority structure is the first step to bring the Baltimore Convention Center inline with how other convention centers around the country operate. This is by no means the final answer to this issue but it is a necessary first step in the process.

Due to the unique funding structure of the Baltimore City, the State of Maryland generates great financial benefits of a successful convention center as Baltimore City does not retain its share of sales tax. This means that all of the State benefits not just Baltimore City and the surrounding Counties. This governance model changes will allow the Baltimore Conventions Center to start the process of addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance and the much needed updates that the building so desperately needs to remain competitive in the market.



**MARYLAND
TOURISM
COALITION**

We respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 1016.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Libber
Legislative Chair
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