



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1016**

**Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority**

**To:** The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee

**Written testimony from:** Kristen Pironis  
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**Date:** February 18, 2025

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and the Ways & Means Committee:

I am writing to express strong **support** for House Bill 1016, which establishes the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority. This bill is a crucial step in strengthening Baltimore City's position as a key destination within Maryland's broader regional tourism strategy.

At Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, we understand the profound economic impact of tourism—not only in terms of revenue generation but also in enhancing the well-being of residents and visitors alike. Our efforts in promoting the destination go beyond advertising; we focus on creating a positive experience that meets and exceeds visitor expectations. This includes the operational aspects of Destination Marketing and Management Organizations (DMOs) that ensure our communities are prepared for tourism in a sustainable way, tackling challenges such as parking, transportation, safety, and workforce development.

DMOs, like Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, exemplify how destination marketing and management collaborate across regions to create a welcoming and prosperous tourism ecosystem. By focusing on inclusive strategies that address accessibility, mobility, and community engagement, these organizations ensure that when visitors arrive, they encounter an experience that exceeds expectations and enhances regional appeal. This mirrors the intent of the legislation for the convention center, ensuring that the city's tourism infrastructure is prepared to meet growing demand while supporting regional collaboration.

Maryland's strength lies in its diversity, and while we focus on our county, we recognize the strength of our region and state as a whole. There are 25 DMOs across Maryland, encompassing all counties as well as Baltimore City and Ocean City. This interconnected approach fosters collaborative efforts that strengthen each community's ability to grow and thrive together. These partnerships drive local economic development and make the region even more attractive to visitors and business, including meetings and conventions.

This bill aligns directly with these goals, ensuring that Baltimore's tourism infrastructure receives the attention and resources it requires while promoting our entire region. Investment in Baltimore through the Authority will benefit surrounding areas, including Anne Arundel County and, specifically, the BWI corridor. It is essential that we focus not only on the City but also on the broader regional context in which it exists. The bill's establishment of a new governing body provides the necessary structure to support sustained growth, effective destination management, and a commitment to enhancing the quality of life for both residents and visitors.



I strongly encourage your support for this bill and look forward to seeing the positive outcomes it will bring for Maryland's tourism industry. Please let me know if I—or my organization—can help in this critical decision and process. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kristen", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

Kristen Pironis  
Executive Director  
Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County