

Chapter 123

(House Bill 238)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Heritage Area Authority and Heritage Areas – Alterations

FOR the purpose of altering the voting membership of the Maryland Heritage Area Authority; increasing the number of voting members of the Authority that constitutes a quorum; repealing the requirement that the Authority send copies of boundary maps to certain county clerks; repealing the requirement that certain State officials develop certain program statements and instead requiring certain State officials and certain units of State government to support and assist certain activities in certified heritage areas in certain ways; authorizing the Authority to award certain grants and loans for certain purposes in a certain manner; repealing certain requirements for certain grants and loans; and generally relating to the Maryland Heritage Area Authority and heritage areas.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Financial Institutions

Section 13–1104(a), 13–1105, 13–1110(d) and (e), 13–1112, and 13–1113

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Financial Institutions

13–1104.

(a) The Authority consists of:

- (1) The Secretary of Housing and Community Development;
- (2) The Secretary of Commerce;
- (3) The Secretary of Higher Education;
- (4) The Secretary of Transportation;
- (5) The Secretary of Natural Resources;
- (6) The Secretary of [the Department of] Planning;

(7) THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE;

(8) THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS;

[(7) (9)] The State Historic Preservation Officer; and

[(8) (10)] Ten members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate:

(i) Two of whom shall be elected officials or representatives of local jurisdictions;

(ii) Two of whom shall be appointed from names recommended by the President of the Maryland Senate;

(iii) Two of whom shall be appointed from names recommended by the Speaker of the House of Delegates;

(iv) **[One of whom is a public member of the Maryland Greenways Commission;**

(v)] One of whom is a public member of the Maryland Tourism Development Board;

(V) ONE OF WHOM IS A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC WHO HAS SIGNIFICANT EDUCATION OR EXPERIENCE IN NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP OR CLIMATE RESILIENCY;

(vi) One of whom is a member of the public who has significant education or experience in historic preservation; and

(vii) One of whom is a member of the public who has significant education or experience in heritage tourism.

13–1105.

(a) **[Nine] TEN** voting members of the Authority are a quorum.

(b) An action of the Authority must receive the affirmative vote of at least a majority of the voting members of the Authority.

(c) The Authority shall determine the times and places of its meetings.

(d) A member of the Authority:

(1) May not receive compensation; but

(2) Is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

13-1110.

(d) (1) The boundaries for each recognized heritage area are the boundaries depicted on the map accompanying each proposal as approved by the Authority.

(2) After initial approval by the Authority of the boundaries of a recognized heritage area, the Authority may amend or revise the boundaries:

(i) With the approval of all of the local jurisdictions where the property to be added or removed is located; and

(ii) On publication in the Maryland Register of a revised drawing, boundary description, or Uniform Resource Locator (URL) to a geographical information system file.

(3) Boundary maps for each recognized heritage area shall be kept on file at the Authority.

[(4) The Authority shall send a copy of each boundary map to the office of the county clerk where the recognized heritage area is located.]

(e) Designation of a heritage area by the Authority as a recognized heritage area establishes eligibility for [matching] grant assistance for the development of management plans.

13-1112.

(a) [(1)] The State officials under items [(i)] (1) through [(vii)] (9) of this subsection who have program responsibilities that affect aspects of the interpretation, preservation, development, and use of heritage area resources shall [prepare a program statement detailing actions] **SUPPORT AND ASSIST ACTIVITIES IN CERTIFIED HERITAGE AREAS** in the areas of planning, development, use, **IMPLEMENTATION**, assistance, and regulation [that support and assist the establishment and management of certified heritage areas], as follows:

[(i)] (1) Secretary of Planning regarding local government adoption of heritage area management plans and regarding historic preservation and museum programs;

[(ii)] (2) Secretary of Housing and Community Development regarding housing and neighborhood revitalization;

[(iii)] **(3)** Secretary of Commerce regarding the State tourism program and economic development and job creation activities;

[(iv)] **(4)** Secretary of Natural Resources regarding outdoor recreation and the management of natural resources, including State greenways;

[(v)] **(5)** Secretary of Higher Education regarding educational resources and their interpretation;

[(vi)] **(6)** Secretary of Transportation regarding access to and transportation within certified heritage areas, including the scenic byways program and programs for special signage; [and]

[(vii)] **(7)** Secretary of General Services regarding the management and disposition of State property;

(8) SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE REGARDING AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES WITHIN CERTIFIED HERITAGE AREAS; AND

(9) STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS REGARDING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION WITHIN CERTIFIED HERITAGE AREAS.

[(2) The State officials shall submit the program statements required under paragraph (1) of this subsection, and any revisions of the statements, to the Authority.]

(b) Units of State government that conduct or support **AND ASSIST** activities affecting a certified heritage area shall:

(1) Consult, cooperate, and to the maximum extent feasible, coordinate their activities with the unit or entity responsible for the management of each certified heritage area;

(2) To the maximum extent practicable, carry out the activities of the unit in a manner that is consistent with the approved management plan for the certified heritage area; and

(3) When conducting a review of activities under §§ 5A–325 and 5A–326 of the State Finance and Procurement Article, assure that the activities will not have an adverse effect on the historic and cultural resources of the certified heritage area, unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.

(a) As provided in the State budget, **AND ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS THE AUTHORITY ESTABLISHES**, the Authority may award:

(1) Grants and loans to local jurisdictions or other appropriate entities for planning, design, acquisition, development, preservation, restoration, interpretation, marketing, and programming of certified heritage areas; and

(2) Grants to local jurisdictions or other appropriate entities to **[develop]:**

(I) DEVELOP management plans in recognized heritage areas; **AND**

(II) ENCOURAGE REVITALIZATION OF AND REINVESTMENT IN CERTIFIED HERITAGE AREA RESOURCES.

(B) IN AWARDING A GRANT OR LOAN UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, THE AUTHORITY MAY REQUIRE MATCHING FUNDS IN WHATEVER PROPORTION THE AUTHORITY CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE.

[(b) A grant to develop a management plan may not exceed 50% of the cost of the management plan.

(c) An acquisition or development grant:

(1) May not be used for any purpose other than implementation of the certified heritage area in conformity with the approved management plan; and

(2) May not exceed 50% of the total project cost for which the grant is awarded.

(d) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, the Authority may make program grants to local jurisdictions and other appropriate entities:

(i) To develop and present interpretive exhibits, materials or other appropriate products to further the educational and recreational objectives of the certified heritage areas program; and

(ii) To encourage revitalization of, and reinvestment in, certified heritage area resources.

(2) A program grant made by the Authority under paragraph (1) of this subsection may not exceed 50% of the estimated project cost.]

[(e) (C) Through the resources of the members of the Authority and in cooperation with other State agencies, the Authority shall provide technical assistance to management entities implementing a management plan.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the term of the initial member of the Maryland Heritage Area Authority who is a member of the public with significant education or experience in natural resource stewardship or climate resiliency under § 13-1104 of the Financial Institutions Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act, shall serve the remainder of the term of the public member of the Maryland Greenways Commission until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor, April 14, 2026.