



January 23, 2020 RE: SB 287

Maryland Arts and Culture Capital Grant Program

Attention: Honorable Members of the Committee

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I write this letter in support of Senate Bill 287. For the last 8 years I have been running Maryland Art Place (MAP), a 38 year old not for profit organization located in the state designated Bromo Arts and Entertainment District. MAP purchased its 5 story, 20,000 square foot building in 1986, vacating the property in the early 90's due to crime and safety challenges, only to return back to its investment in 2014 under my leadership. The A&E designation was catalyst for our return and reinvestment among other factors such as more meaningful community engagement opportunities (MAP was formerly at the Power Plant Live Facility).

As anticipated, MAP's building has become extraordinarily important to our cultural eco-system in Baltimore City and is an economic driver. MAP also represents the State in Baltimore City and is the sole operator of the Maryland State Artist Registry and Resource Bulletin on behalf of the Maryland State Arts Council. Under our roof we house many individual artists, three fine art galleries (MAP's 2,400 square feet at street-level), and a handful of creative start-ups to include several music studios, fashion designers (Nationally acclaimed Bishme Cromartie incubated here the last 5 years), and a basement Cabaret we are working to revitalize which was once home to Baltimore's sub-culture and more marginalized performative communities (last 20 years). The Cabaret will be a great source of earned income for MAP if fully realized.

I share all this because securing the type of capital we need to not only improve the building, but also keep it safe for all our tenants, has been more than a challenge. We are constantly competing for small pots of capital that we need to make needed and necessary improvements for stability now and in the future. The truth is we need more than these small pots. The passing of this bill could have profound effects much like the Cultural Facilities Program run by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, which helped to revitalize the Historic Anacostia Corridor and many other thriving neighborhoods in DC today.

Please consider passing SB 287. If passed, the effects will yield great reward and its impact will be considerable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy C. Royce". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Amy Cavanaugh Royce
Executive Director, Maryland Art Place