



Larry Hogan | Governor
Boyd Rutherford | Lt. Governor
Kelly M. Schulz | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: February 28, 2020 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance
BILL NO: Senate Bill 707
BILL TITLE: Task Force on the Tourism Industry in Maryland
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce supports Senate Bill 707 – Task Force on the Tourism Industry in Maryland.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 707 establishes the Task Force on the Tourism Industry in Maryland, which is tasked with reviewing the need for additional funding, training, and other resources necessary to increase diversity and inclusion in the tourism industry in the State. The Task Force is required to report its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 1, 2022. The Office of Tourism Development within the Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) will provide staff for the Task Force.

Background:

Diversity and inclusion is at the center of the state tourism “Open for IT!” advertising campaign. The Office has always made sure that its contractors meet and exceed MBE goals, ensure diversity in its publications and web site, and that advertising creative and media purchases appeal to a diverse audience. Commerce is proud of its efforts and is always striving to do more.

The Task Force will bring various groups and state agencies involved in the development of and promotion of tourism in Maryland. Many of the groups named in the language of SB 707 already work toward the goal of diversity and inclusion; however, a deeper dive into resources already available and additional resources that might be necessary will provide a comprehensive platform to elevate diversity and inclusion in the tourism industry. These resources may range from grants and funds for development of visitor experiences to the promotion of those visitor experiences.

Rationale:

Insights gathered through the Task Force’s efforts can guide the work to make recommendations for additional funding, training and other resources necessary to increase diversity and inclusion in the tourism industry. Commerce welcomes the opportunity to staff this Task Force and gain additional knowledge in order to improve the Department’s efforts in future years.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 707.