

# **Bromo Letter of Support Senate Bill 256.pdf**

Uploaded by: Breiter, Emily

Position: FAV



DATE: 1/14/2021

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance

BILL NO: Senate Bill 256

BILL TITLE: Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions

POSITION: Support

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

The Bromo Arts District is located in the heart of Downtown Baltimore and is home to over 30 cultural organizations and over 500 artists or those employed through the arts industry. Established in 2012, our district has continued to grow and attract talented individuals and businesses to the area. Bromo works closely with the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) and receives direct support from Steven Skerritt-Davis and their entire team. Their organization advocates for important arts projects in our area and has provided consistent financial support to Bromo, which has enabled our organization to grow our programs for the district. In 2020, their support allowed Bromo to directly support artists who had been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. MSAC initiated city-wide Arts & Entertainment District conversations that have drastically improved our coordination and programming throughout the city and state.

The Bromo Arts District strongly supports SB 256. The updates to the artistic definitions for the State will have profound effects on our district and will be more inclusive of our expanding view of artistic work. The revisions have resulted from many years of requests directly from the arts districts, cultural organizations, and artists for clarity on the tax incentive eligibility. Not only will our current artists and arts organizations be able to take advantage of this update, but these changes will help attract new artists to the area that will be vital in our continued growth and in line with our district goals. This bill would spur additional economic activity in the district and would provide artists with the necessary tools to grow their artistic practices.

We greatly appreciate the time and energy dedicated to reviewing this bill and the commitment to the expansion of arts in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Breiter".

Emily Breiter  
Executive Director

Bromo Tower Arts & Entertainment Inc.  
218 W. Saratoga Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-528-7713

# **SB256BaltimoreArtsGuild.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cochran, Mary Catherine

Position: FAV



January 18, 2021

Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB256, Arts & Entertainment Districts

Madame Chair, and distinguished members of the committee,

The Baltimore County Arts Guild enthusiastically supports Senate Bill 256 to expand definitions related to state-designated Arts & Entertainment Districts.

The Baltimore County Arts Guild, a 501c3, is the managing entity of Baltimore County's Arts & Entertainment Districts, which include the first and newly designated Catonsville A&E. We work closely with the Maryland State Arts Council and with Baltimore County Government to encourage arts and culture as a driver for economic development in these commercial revitalization zones.

Despite a difficult economic picture in the last year, the town of Catonsville has gained three new arts related businesses. Additionally, several existing businesses have moved forward with plans to add arts and music spaces or artist studio spaces to their business model.

We believe that the Arts & Entertainment model works for revitalization while at the same time supporting local artists and businesses and providing creative opportunity for visitors, therefore, we appreciate your consideration of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Catherine Cochran".

Mary Catherine Cochran  
Director, Baltimore County Arts Guild

# **SNAD\_Testimony\_Support\_SB256.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dwyer, Maura

Position: FAV

**Station North Arts District**  
*A program of Central Baltimore Partnership*



DATE: January 20, 2020

BILL NO: **Senate Bill 256**

BILL TITLE: *Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions*

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Located in the heart of Baltimore, The Station North Arts District (SNAD ) was the first area in Baltimore to receive the State designation as an Arts & Entertainment District in 2002. Spanning the historic neighborhoods of Barclay, Charles North, and Greenmount West, SNAD is a diverse collection of artist live-work spaces, maker spaces, galleries, nationally recognized performance venues, rowhomes, and businesses.

The SNAD is an incredible constellation of amazing institutions, artists, and neighborhood leaders. In the last three years, we have started *Annual Asia North Festival*—a celebration of the past and present contributions of Korean-Americans when the area was Baltimore's unofficial Koreatown. Moreover, SNAD worked with key partners to expand Artscape, hosted regular, free public events every week before the pandemic, co-coordinated annual art markets, nurtured creative entrepreneurial spaces in partnership with the Made In Baltimore program, and created district-wide tours to attract visitors.

Over the past decade, developers and non-profit partners have redeveloped vacant blocks into high-quality affordable artist housing. One of those locations, City Arts Apartments I and II, has received awards in two national competitions for *Low Income Housing Tax Credit* developments. This year the Station North Arts District became a program of the Central Baltimore Partnership, a longtime partner and ally, which will add capacity to more fully engage in district promotion, activation, and artist support measures.

SNAD works closely with the Maryland State Arts Council, attending regular meetings to share updates, funding opportunities, and professional development. We have recently received an MSAC operating grant under MSAC's Grants for Organizations program, along with two MSAC Emergency Grants that supported staff positions during a pandemic when many were laid off. Both the operating and emergency grants have made it possible for SNAD to plan an ambitious year that focuses on artist advocacy and support, resulting in the management of direct funding via commissions, and innovative virtual event planning.

SNAD supports bill SB256 because we believe more artists and entertainment enterprises will use and benefit from tax incentives the state offers if the terminology and definitions that outline what qualifies is more inclusive and clear. We have heard directly from constituents in our district that the existing language does not represent them, and edits are absolutely required to increase the number of people who take advantage of the benefits. Feedback on more accurate revisions have been gathered over the course of several years directly from the individuals it impacts the most. Any fiscal impact will be small and offset by gains from the activity generated within the district when clear communication on how these tax incentives benefit artists can be more widely shared.

With the goal of increasing the use of these tax incentives to strengthen the role of arts districts across Maryland, we affirm our support for SB625.

**Station North Arts District**  
*A program of Central Baltimore Partnership*



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line.

Jack Danna, Director of Commercial Revitalization for Central Baltimore Partnership

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a cursive style with a prominent 'M' and 'D'.

Maura Dwyer, Program Coordinator for the Station North Arts District

:

# **HyCDC LoS - SB256 A&E Districts (2021).pdf**

Uploaded by: Eisenberg, Stuart

Position: FAV





4314 Farragut Street - Hyattsville, MD 20781 - (301) 683-8267 (O) - (207) 470-3805 (F) - [www.hycdc.org](http://www.hycdc.org)

Board of Directors:

Todd Dengel, Board Chair  
Jay Shuman, Vice-Chair  
Cliff Mayo, Treasurer  
Gloria Felix-Thompson, Secretary  
Lisa Jordan, Past Chair

Chris Hatcher  
Lynda Lynn  
Lawrence Taub  
Mark G. L. Ferguson, Charter Member  
Michael Franklin, Charter Member

Executive Director: Stuart W. Eisenberg

January 18, 2021

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB256**

**Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise – Definitions**

Thank you for your consideration of SB256 – Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise – Definitions. The Hyattsville Community Development Corporation (HCDC) supports SB256 as the managing entity of the Gateway Arts & Entertainment District, one of the 29 operating Arts & Entertainment (A&E) Districts in the State of Maryland.

Founded in 2001 following the drive of four municipalities acting as one community to revitalize their neighborhoods, the Gateway Arts & Entertainment District has emerged as a safe, vital, and attractive mixed-use environment that celebrates the diversity of the artists that work in the 2.2-mile corridor along Route One.

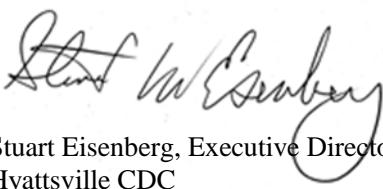
Since its establishment, the rich artistic creativity of the Gateway Arts & Entertainment District has contributed to attracting hundreds of millions of dollars in development and increased assessable tax base. It has supported the emergence of a variety of studio collaboratives, restaurants, coffee houses, local performance venues, craft breweries, galleries and entertainment. A profusion of arts-related businesses such furniture up-cyclers, craft retailers, designers, an art supply store, and a paint/design center that support have been opened, and they extend the influence of the artists' community and build the economic vitality of the region.

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) has provided significant support to the Gateway Arts & Entertainment District through its role in administering A&E Districts across the State. Specifically, MSAC has afforded technical and strategic financial support to promote available A&E tax incentives for artists within our District; to leverage our District's unique identity to attract tourism; and to increase our District's arts activity, particularly through supporting events such as the Annual Downtown Hyattsville Arts Festival.

In developing SB256, a technical improvement bill clarifying the tax credits for the A & E Districts, MSAC collected feedback over a period of several years from A&E District managers and constituents from around the State. The clarifications in this legislation will allow MSAC and the A & E Districts to more effectively communicate incentive eligibility and meet their revitalization and economic development goals. As we continue to weather the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, artists need support now more than ever to sustain and grow their livelihoods. SB256 will help MSAC better support artists and the arts sector.

For these reasons, HCDC respectfully requests a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB256.

Sincerely,

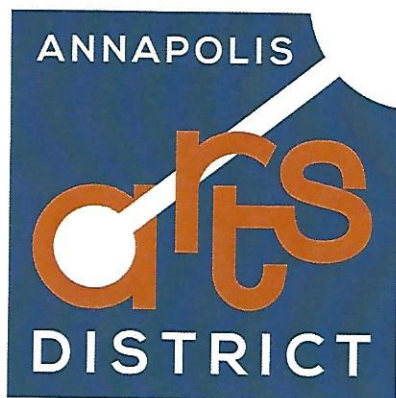


Stuart Eisenberg, Executive Director  
Hyattsville CDC

# Scan\_0182.pdf

Uploaded by: Evans, Erik

Position: FAV



**DATE:** January 18, 2020 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance  
**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 256  
**BILL TITLE:** Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and  
Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions  
**POSITION:** Support

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

The Annapolis Arts District supports Senate Bill 256 Arts and Entertainment Districts — Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions.

We have worked with the Maryland State Arts Council and other arts districts around the state to give input on clarifying the definitions of artistic work and activities of an arts and entertainment enterprise.

Updating the definitions of artistic works and arts and entertainment enterprises will make it easier to attract and retain artists and arts organizations in the 29 arts districts around the state, including the Annapolis Arts District.

It will also resolve questions frequently asked by local artists and arts organizations if they qualify for tax credit incentives the State and local governments provide to artists within the bounds of state authorized arts districts.

This past year has been especially hard on the arts community. Passing this SB256 will be one step you can take to making a brighter future for the local arts community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Evans".

Erik Evans  
Executive Director  
Annapolis Arts District

# **SBYA&EDISTRICT\_SUPPORT LETTER SB256.pdf**

Uploaded by: Heater, Jamie

Position: FAV



Salisbury Arts and Entertainment District, Inc.  
110 N. Division Street, Salisbury, MD 21801

January 18, 2020

Maryland General Assembly  
Attn: Senate Finance Committee  
3 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

To: Senate Finance Committee  
RE: Senate Bill 256

I am writing to you on behalf of the Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District, located on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District received its State designation as an Arts & Entertainment District in 2007 and has been using the program ever since to bring vibrancy, revitalization, arts and culture to Downtown Salisbury. Our signature events, like 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays and the Downtown Salisbury Festival, draw thousands of local citizens into the heart of our city each year, instilling a sense of community into the very fabric of our Downtown.

The Maryland State Arts Council's guidance, and support with this program is invaluable, with Stephen Skerritt-Davis spearheading the connections between MSAC and the local arts district managers. District managers have access to operating support, technical assistance, responsive counsel and professional development. Without access to this leadership, professionalism, and the framework that the Maryland State Arts Council provides - Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District would not have thrived.

On behalf of the Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District, I am writing to express my support of the SB256 and the adoption of a clarified definition of "artistic works" and "arts and entertainment enterprise". The existing terms are too broad to be functional in the diverse settings that the arts contain. The compiled changes are fair, descriptive and have been made with very careful consideration. Updated definitions will allow more artists and artistic enterprises to find themselves within the bill's language, and confidently use the programs so graciously enacted by the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jamie Heater". The signature is stylized with a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jamie Heater  
Executive Director, Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District, Inc.

## **SB256 Support Letter.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jessop, Rebecca

Position: FAV



DATE: January 18, 2021

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance

BILL NO: Senate Bill 256

BILL TITLE: Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions

POSITION: Support

The Havre de Grace Arts Collective, manager of the Havre de Grace Arts & Entertainment (A&E) District, supports Senate Bill 256 Arts and Entertainment Districts — Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions.

SB 256 alters the existing definitions for Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise in the Art and Entertainment (A&E) Districts designation program by (1) updating the terminology used to define artistic work and (2) clarifying the activities of an arts and entertainment enterprise.

Havre de Grace is one of 25 designated Arts and Entertainment Districts across Maryland. Havre de Grace's unique qualities attract thousands of visitors each year. Located at the junction of the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay, Havre de Grace has been an inspiration to artists for centuries. The Havre de Grace Arts & Entertainment (A&E) District is home to almost a hundred annual festivals and events, including First Fridays, Jazz & Blue Fest, Oktoberfest, Farmer's Market, July 4<sup>th</sup> and Mardi Gras parades and many more.

The A&E Committee, community leaders and representatives of HdG museums, meets monthly to develop, promote, and support diverse artistic activities and events in HdG creating a sense of place, attracting tourism and spurring economic vitality. The District promotes tax incentives (a state income tax subtraction modification for artists who work and sell in districts and the opportunity for local property tax incentive sand abatement of the admissions and amusement tax). Other projects being developed include quarterly Art Walks, an Artist Registry and Gallery & Art Shop Registry, self-guided Art Tour, District Banners, business Welcome Flags, Sidewalk Plaques, photo-op stations, arts-related street crossings and gift cards.

The Arts Collective works closely with Steven Skerritt-Davis and other staff at the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) on maintaining and growing the A&E District through tangible and intangible support. MSAC's support makes it possible to develop and enact creative ideas to support the arts community while vitalizing the area economically.

SB256 will strengthen the A&E District by clarifying eligibility for tax incentives making it easier to communicate clearly with artists to provide the support needed to grow their livelihoods.

Sincerely,

William Price  
Board Chair

Rebecca R. Jessop  
Executive Director

## **SB256 Letter of Support - Motor House.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kashaka, Camille

Position: FAV



January 22, 2021

Senate Finance Committee:

Motor House, an organization in the Station North Arts District, supports Senate Bill 256 Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions.

Motor House is an arts hub that champions the bold and experimental work of emerging artists in Baltimore. We work directly with the artists and consumers of art to foster a creative ecosystem that supports our community's cultural and economic environment.

Because of our location in the Station North Arts District, Motor House has been able to make relationships with a number of other organizations, individual artists, as well as neighborhood businesses. The existence of this arts district facilitates the collaborative spirit of each organization or artist, and multiplies our individual impact. We have been able to collaborate with the District on festivals like the Asia North Festival for the past few years. Here, we have celebrated the Asian population that is a part of the neighborhood's spine. We work with the Korean restaurants in the area and cultural groups like Asian Arts and Culture Center at Towson University among dozens of others.

The work that Motor House does includes a diverse array of activities. Under this expanded definition of **Artistic Work** and **Arts and Entertainment Enterprise**, many of our partners will be able to benefit in ways in which they have previously been excluded. The fashion designers in our studios who create unique, one-of-a-kind pieces that function as both installation work as well as wearable garments would now be able to benefit. Opportunities like this bring more activation, economic activity, tourism, and interest in our district.

Thank you,

Camille Kashaka  
Executive Director  
Motor House

# **SB256 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: McEwen, Mary

Position: FAV



January 18, 2021

Hello from the snowy hills of Garrett County! I hope you are all well and safe in this unprecedented time. I am writing to you to urge your support for SB256, “Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise – Definitions.” The bill seeks to alter the definitions of "artistic work" and "arts and entertainment enterprise" by updating the terminology used to define artistic work and by clarifying the activities of an arts and entertainment enterprise, and increase the eligibility for area artists and organizations to claim certain tax incentives.

Here on the Maryland Mountaintop we have established Arts & Entertainment Districts in Grantsville and Oakland. I took over as the coordinator of these Districts one year ago. The pandemic has certainly curtailed our activity, but we have made significant progress despite the shutdown. We engaged in an intensive strategic planning process this year, using grant funding specifically for that purpose, and now have a solid, detailed outlook for the next five years in both towns. There is such hope and promise in the progress of both Districts, and we are eager to jump into the post-Covid world as soon as possible to continue our vital work.

One of our main priorities is to publicize a clear, easy-to-understand message regarding tax incentives to those creating and selling work, performances, or other creative products within the Districts. For more than two years, the Maryland State Arts Council has been working with A&E District managers, advisory boards, and constituents to create solid program development and to support each unique District with what is most needed for success. One significant finding of that process was the recommendation to revise definitions within the A&E District statute for clarity, and to adjust the language to be consistent with the way artists make work.

SB256 introduces revisions to the Artistic Work and Arts & Entertainment Enterprise that provide clarity to Maryland artists and A&E enterprises about the program, and communicates more specifically the benefits of the A&E Districts. The ultimate goal that should logically follow is an increase in economic development through the generation of arts activity and investment in the A&E Districts of Oakland and Grantsville, which does then support the rest of the county.

The revisions contained in SB256 clarify *but do not change* who and what entities are eligible for the state's income tax subtraction modification, as well as local property tax credits and the abatement of the admission and amusement tax. If the revisions provide clarity, then more landowners, artists, and businesses may take advantage of the credits made available through the legislation. MSAC and A&E District program staff feel the actual impact of this will be minimal, well offset by the benefits of increased arts activity.

Maryland was among the first states to enact the A&E District program through legislation and is now considered one of the nation's strongest. The income generated by the program is significant statewide,

now with 29 districts in 19 counties and Baltimore City. In FY19, new businesses and events in 26 districts supported more than 1,600 fulltime-equivalent jobs, contributed over \$155 million to the state's GDP, and generated \$12.4 million in state and local taxes. If we can simply clarify the language and attract more arts enterprises within our Districts, those numbers will only increase.

In the Grantsville A&E District, we are looking forward to 2021 with our strategic plan in place. The National Roads Festival is on the horizon, with all last year's canceled plans back on the table. The A&E District will provide music, an arts history presentation to local school children, an artist vendor fair, and more. I have already applied for and obtained a \$2,000 grant from the Western Maryland Heritage Area for that event. Our strategic plan includes exciting prospects of researching the Native American history of the District and the artistry of those early residents, as well as a collaboration with Spruce Forest Artisan Village, which was damaged extensively by a microburst last May. We are helping to seek and make repairs in that vital arts location.

In Oakland we are engaging in a new branding plan to create a logo, signage, and other marketing tools to better mark the District and celebrate the historic area in which it lies. We are preparing to launch a quarantine-inspired "Play Bake" event, inviting residents to try their hand at writing impromptu plays and then selecting the best of those efforts for online readings.

As coordinator of the Districts, my plans this winter and early spring are to convene meetings with the mayors and councils of both towns, as well as the Garrett County Commissioners, in order to update everyone on our progress, as well as to clarify and refresh all key leaders in the definition, benefits, and mission of the A&E Districts. This clarified language in SB256 will help a great deal in those efforts.

Despite the limitations placed upon all because of the pandemic, we are forging ahead. If we can better explain the tax benefits to incoming artists and arts enterprises through the clarifications outlined in SB256, I can only predict more improvement, developments, and successes in the A&E Districts of Grantsville and Oakland. I do hope that you will support this bill.

I appreciate your attention to this letter and to the matter at hand.

Sincerely,

*Mary S. McEwen*

Mary Sincell McEwen  
A&E District Coordinator  
Grantsville and Oakland  
240-442-7154  
[info@oaklandaedistrict.com](mailto:info@oaklandaedistrict.com)  
[aedistrict@visitgrantsville.com](mailto:aedistrict@visitgrantsville.com)

## **SB 256 support Crisfield Arts & Entertainment Dist**

Uploaded by: Merritt, Jennifer

Position: FAV

Crisfield Arts & Entertainment District Project  
4 E Main St  
Crisfield MD 21817

Dear Senators,

I am writing in support of SB 256 which alters the definitions of "artistic work" and "arts and entertainment enterprise" for purposes of provisions of law governing the State arts and entertainment district program as well as altering the eligibility for certain persons to claim certain tax incentives and applying the Act to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2020.

On behalf of the Crisfield Arts & Entertainment District, I took part in multiple public listening sessions, including Maryland State Arts Council listening sessions, that lead to the content of SB 256. In addition, as the Crisfield Arts & Entertainment (A & E) District Coordinator, I have led approximately six community meetings per month since the A & E District began its planning in 2017. These meetings are open to the Crisfield and surrounding artistic community and are attended by an average of twenty people per meeting. From the community input from these meetings, I believe that the changes proposed by SB 256 are in line with community needs.

I hope that you will favorably consider this bill.

Thank you,



Jennifer Merritt  
Crisfield Arts & Entertainment District Coordinator

## **Downtown Frederick Partnership Letter of Support f**

Uploaded by: Norman, Kara

Position: FAV



January 15, 2021

Senator Delores G Kelley, Chair  
Maryland Senate Finance Committee  
3 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 256: Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions

POSITION: Support

Dear Senator Kelley:

I am writing to express Downtown Frederick Partnership's strong support for SB 256: Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise – Definitions. The Partnership together with the Frederick Arts Council co-manage the state recognized Downtown Frederick A&E District.

Downtown Frederick is where history meets martini bars, where shop owners really do know your name, where high tech mingles with old school and where you can always find the perfect plate to satisfy your hunger. On any given visit to Downtown Frederick, you can enjoy fine art, shopping and dining, and, in non-pandemic times, a calendar chockfull of events. Take in the abundance of public art, murals and placemaking projects that give Downtown Frederick its unique vibe. Enjoy one of our homegrown breweries, distilleries or wine shops, and explore over 200 independently-owned businesses.

Designation as an A&E District is both a recognition of the value of the artistic and creative community to Downtown Frederick's economic health, vibrancy and success as well as an opportunity to provide support to help grow this key sector of our economy. The Partnership has benefitted from a strong working relationship with the MSAC. The organization has received both financial and technical support that has assisted our efforts to improve our A&E District.

The Partnership appreciates the opportunities organized by the MSAC to participate in conversations and offer input on this proposed legislation. The Partnership believes the approval of this bill will assist in better communicating this program to our creative community, especially the updated terminology used to define artistic work. While the proposed improvements to the legislation would be helpful at any time, the impacts of the pandemic create an even stronger need to help sustain and grow our artist community.

Sincerely,

*Kara Norman*

Kara Norman, AICP; Executive Director



# **Letter of Support SB256.pdf**

Uploaded by: Price, Jessica

Position: FAV



*Building on the past  
for a brighter future*

101 East Main Street  
Elkton, MD 21921  
410-398-5076  
Fax 410-398-4971  
www.elktonalliance.org



Dwight E. Hair  
Frances H. Whitaker  
*Honorary Lifetime Members*

**Board of Directors:**

**Officers:**

Brad Carrillo  
President  
Danielle Carroll  
Vice-President  
Marjorie Blystone  
Treasurer  
Cindy E. Fetterolf  
Secretary

**Directors:**

Kelly Walla Albanese  
Candy Bathon  
Michael J. Browne  
Wendy Burkley-Barry  
John P. Downs  
Sandra Edwards  
Jon Esser  
Donald S. Hicks  
John Palmer Jr.

**Ex-Officio**

Robert J. Alt, Mayor

January 13, 2021

Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

**RE: SB0256**

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

Elkton's Arts & Entertainment District wishes to declare our support for SB0256. The approval of this bill will insure our artists have better clarification of their eligibility for the available tax incentives. We will promote these incentives in order to attract new businesses thus increasing tourism and the further growth of our arts activities.

Nestled in the upper corner of the Chesapeake Bay, Elkton's Arts & Entertainment District features artistic treasures great and small. Consisting of unique galleries, working studios, whimsical public art, live performances and delicious eateries, the district is a feast for the eyes and the senses. Our district provides the community a wealth of experiences to be entertained, educated and creatively inspired. Live entertainment can be found at our free concert/Music on Main events. Arts education can be sought through Cecil College Elkton Station Performing Arts and/or Fine Arts programs. Creativity can be inspired through workshops provided by the Cecil County Arts Council, our local pottery studio Art Space on Main or by attending the gallery openings held the first Friday of each month.

Our relationship with the Maryland State Arts Council has been a huge asset for our districts ability to market ourselves to the greater community and grow as a creative focal point for the arts in our county. Steven Skerritt-Davis has been a valuable partner and resource in assisting us as we move our district forward.

Sincerely:

Jessica Price  
Executive Director

*A Maryland Main Street Community*

# **SB 256 Support - Town of Bel Air.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robertson, Angela

Position: FAV



# TOWN OF BEL AIR

## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

37 N. Main Street • Bel Air, MD 21014

[www.belairmd.org](http://www.belairmd.org)

Phone: 410-838-0584

Email: [economicdevelopment@belairmd.org](mailto:economicdevelopment@belairmd.org)

---

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Amy G. Chmielewski

Kevin M. Bianca

Erin S. Hughes

Donna L. Kahoe

Patrick T. Richards

### *DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

Trish Heidenreich

Date: January 18, 2021

Committee: Senate Finance

Bill Number: Senate Bill 256

Bill Title: Arts and Entertainment Districts - Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment  
Enterprise - Definitions

Position: Support

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Town of Bel Air in support of SB 256 Arts and Entertainment Districts - Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise - Definitions.

Our designation as an Arts & Entertainment District is important to our community as it encourages tourism and economic growth for our historic, small town. Our designation also creates a sense of community and adds value to the quality of life for the people who call Bel Air home. In FY20, even with the last quarter affected by the pandemic, our A&E District hosted 197 events with approximately 43,385 recorded attendees and seven festivals with approximate attendance of 61,077. These events and festivals create economic activity in our community and visitors who are likely to make a return trip. Our designation also creates opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors to open arts related businesses creating jobs in our community.

Maryland State Arts Council provides support in many ways to our District and to individual artists in our community. They provide avenues by which our artists can sell their work, tax incentives to assist our artists, resources for our staff, educational and networking opportunities, and a state designation which we are proud to hold. In addition, we are offered the opportunity for grant funding which helps us to continually improve our community. The Maryland State Arts Council has shown time and again their dedication to improving Maryland communities and the lives of Marylanders through their Arts & Entertainment District designation.

The changes being presented in SB 256 will have a positive impact as they will clarify the activities of an arts and entertainment enterprise and they will update the terminology used to define artistic work to make it more clear to our artists and to our staff. The proposed changes will help our staff more clearly communicate the benefits of the program to artists, entrepreneurs and investors. We hope that through these changes and clarifications, we will see increased investment in our arts community.

I strongly urge you to support SB 256 and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Robertson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Angela Robertson

Economic Development Coordinator / Arts & Entertainment District Manager

# **Written Testimony\_FrostburgFirst\_SB256.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robertson, Deirdre

Position: FAV



FrostburgFirst  
41 E. Main St / Frostburg, MD 21532  
(301) 689-6900  
downtownfrostburg.com

*To develop and foster a prosperous, vibrant, sustainable, and resilient designated Frostburg Main Street Community.*

January 22, 2021

Senate Finance Committee

Senator Delores G. Kelley  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
3 East Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Kelley:

Thank you for this opportunity to share testimony regarding SB256 - Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise – Definitions. My name is Deirdre Robertson, and I am the Executive Director of FrostburgFirst, a Maryland Main Street Community, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-stock corporation which manages the Frostburg Arts & Entertainment District. Frostburg has been a designated Maryland A&E District since 2009 and was re-designated in 2019. FrostburgFirst is also a nationally and state designated Main Street Program, and is included in the Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area. We are a member-led economic development and revitalization organization formed and operated for the purpose of promoting and advancing downtown Frostburg, a college town in Western Maryland. Our city is home to approximately 9,000 people, with an increase of around 5,500 when Frostburg State University is in session. Specifically, FrostburgFirst engages the community, enhances streetscape aesthetics, supports and promotes small businesses, and organizes programs and events to make Frostburg a wonderful place to live, work, and visit, and our Arts & Entertainment designation plays a significant role in our mission.

Since Frostburg's original designation, our organization has leveraged funds from Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) Technical Assistance Grants and Operating Assistance Grants to more than triple the State's investment in the program. The A&E District has provided Frostburg with the means to drive tourism, encourage creative place-making, and share resources with the art community. In the past several years, funding and resources provided through MSAC and Deputy Director Steven Skeritt-Davis have helped us to install decorative lamppost banners designed by a local artist in a community-wide contest, collaborate in multiple public art projects, coordinate events like our annual Arts Walk, and support programs like Pop-Up Frostburg, which provides local artists with a temporary gallery and retail space in our District. Support from MSAC is key in moving our programs forward and developing new resources to encourage the arts to flourish in Allegany County.

I am writing in support of the changes to the definition of "artistic work" and clarification of eligible entities for tax incentives as expressed in SB256. These updates reflect the diversity of the modern artist community and will help to address the needs of Maryland artists, who now face significant financial challenges and difficulty with exhibition. These recommendations are the result of several years of work and feedback from constituency to refine the terms and clarify eligibility for tax incentives, which can be confusing and exclude artists and art enterprises who contribute to our A&E Districts. The changes proposed will make it easier to communicate the benefits of the Frostburg A&E District and assist in economic revitalization and artist relocation efforts. Any fiscal impacts resulting from the proposed changes will be minimal and in the long-term mitigated by the benefits to Districts and residing artists and art enterprises. The ability to clearly communicate the benefits of expanding a business or relocating to our A&E District will provide long-term improvements in business and artist recruitment. A thriving A&E District promotes residential relocation, collaboration with other organizations, and provides resources to existing artists and art enterprises within the district who may not have been previously eligible or did not understand how to take advantage of the tax incentives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Robertson  
Executive Director

## **A&E by County.pdf**

Uploaded by: Schulz, Kelly

Position: FAV



## Maryland Arts and Entertainment Districts

<b>Arts &amp; Entertainment District Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Designation Expires</b>
Annapolis Arts District	Anne Arundel	2028
Town of Bel Air A&E District	Harford	2021
Berlin A&E District	Worcester	2025
Bethesda A&E District	Montgomery	2022
Bromo Arts District	Baltimore City	2022
Cambridge A&E District	Dorchester	2023
Catonsville A&E District	Baltimore County	2030
Chestertown A&E District	Kent	2025
Crisfield A&E District	Somerset	2028
Cumberland A&E District	Allegany	2022
Denton A&E District	Caroline	2025
Easton Arts District	Talbot	2029
Elkton A&E District	Cecil	2026
Downtown Frederick A&E District	Frederick	2023
Frostburg A&E District	Allegany	2029
Gateway Arts District	Prince George's	2021
Grantsville A&E District	Garrett	2025
Hagerstown A&E District	Washington	2022
Havre De Grace A&E District	Harford	2028
Highlandtown A&E District	Baltimore City	2023
Leonardtwn A&E District	St. Mary's	2023
Oakland A&E District	Garrett	2027
Black Arts Distirct (Pennsylvania Avenue)	Baltimore City	2029
Salisbury A&E District	Wicomico	2027
Silver Spring A&E District	Montgomery	2021
Arts on the River (Snow Hill)	Worcester	2026
Station North A&E District	Baltimore City	2022
Historic Stevensville A&E District	Queen Anne's	2023
Wheaton A&E District	Montgomery	2026

**See district borders:**

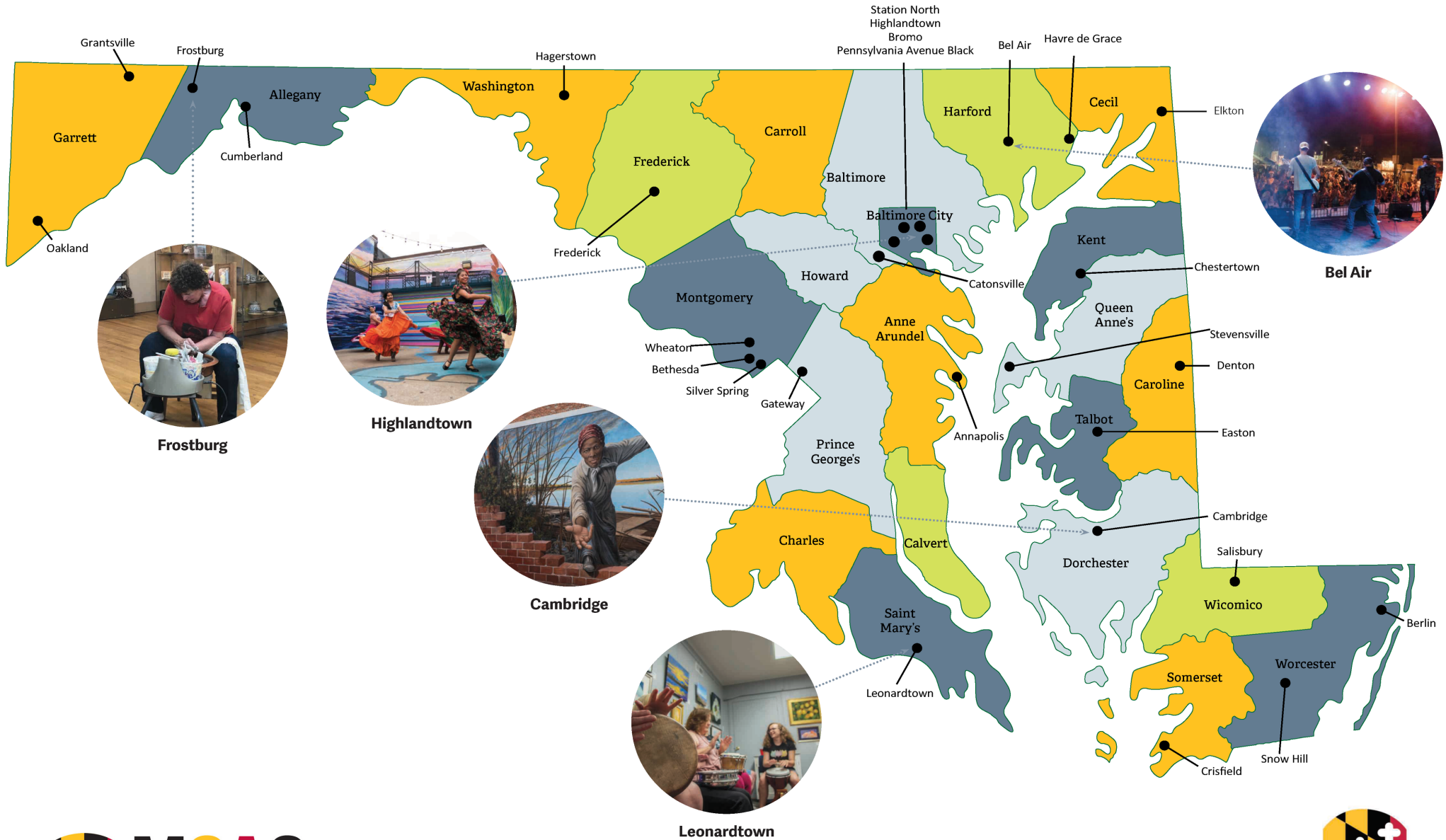
[https://data.imap.maryland.gov/datasets/57ca8c352332496b86280e9ff0be8d57\\_2/data](https://data.imap.maryland.gov/datasets/57ca8c352332496b86280e9ff0be8d57_2/data)

## **A&E Districts Map (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Schulz, Kelly

Position: FAV

# MARYLAND'S ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS



# **SB 256\_A&E Definitions\_Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Schulz, Kelly

Position: FAV



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

**DATE:** January 20, 2020      **COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance  
**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 256  
**BILL TITLE:** Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and  
Entertainment Enterprise – Definitions  
**POSITION:** Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce supports Senate Bill 256 – Arts and Entertainment Districts – Artistic Work and Arts and Entertainment Enterprise – Definitions.

**Bill Summary:**

SB 256 alters the existing definitions for “Artistic Work” and “Arts and Entertainment Enterprise” for the purposes of the Art and Entertainment (A&E) Districts program by (1) updating the terminology used to define artistic work, and (2) clarifying the activities of an arts and entertainment enterprise.

**Background:**

Established through legislation in 2001, Maryland’s A&E Districts program helps develop, promote, and support diverse artistic and cultural centers in communities throughout Maryland that preserve a sense of place, provide unique local experiences, attract tourism, and spur economic revitalization and neighborhood pride. The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC), within the Department of Commerce, administers the A&E Districts program, supporting designated districts to meet local revitalization and economic development goals. Activities of the districts include:

- promoting the available tax incentives (a state income tax subtraction modification for artists who work and sell in districts and the opportunity for local property tax incentives and abatement of the admissions and amusement tax),
- attracting new businesses and investment,
- leveraging a district’s unique identity to attract tourism, and
- increasing arts activity.

Currently, there are 29 districts in 19 counties and Baltimore City. In FY19, new businesses and events in 26 districts supported more than 1,600 FTE jobs, contributed over \$155 million to the state’s GDP, and generated \$12.4 million in state and local taxes.<sup>i</sup> Maryland was one of the first states to enact an arts or cultural district designation program through legislation. Now, 15 states administer similar statewide certification or designation programs, and Maryland’s A&E Districts program’s successes – particularly the program’s tax incentives, economic impact, and the strength of its rural districts – are cited as examples for other states considering arts as a tool for economic development and quality of life improvement<sup>ii</sup>.

**Rationale:**

MSAC staff collected feedback over a period of more than two years from constituents, district managers, and the public to inform program development and understand how better to support districts in achieving their goals. The process included site visits to each district, several meetings with district managers, a public listening session, and meetings with interested constituents to develop specific recommendations. One outcome of the process was the recommendation to revise definitions within the A&E District statute for clarity and update terminology to be consistent with the way artists make work.

The revisions of the “Artistic Work” and “Arts & Entertainment Enterprise” definitions are intended to:

- provide clarity to Maryland artists and arts and entertainment enterprises about the applicability of the program,
- increase the ability of MSAC and Commerce employees to effectively communicate the program’s benefits, and
- ultimately help local governments see progress toward economic development goals through the generation of arts activity and investment within A&E districts across the state.

The revisions clarify (but do not alter) who and what entities are eligible for the state’s income tax subtraction modification as well as local property tax credits and the abatement of the admission and amusement tax. The clarity may mean that more landowners, artists, and businesses take advantage of the credits made available through the legislation and agreed to by local governments that have received designation, however, A&E Districts program staff believe that the actual impact will be minimal and the benefits from the increased arts activity, as discussed above, will outweigh any negative fiscal impacts.

The Maryland Department of Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 256.

---

<sup>i</sup> FY219 Maryland Arts and Entertainment District Economic and Tax Impact Analysis, Regional Economic Impact Studies Institute, Towson University (June 2020)

<sup>ii</sup> Rural Prosperity Through the Arts and Creative Sector: A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States, National Governor’s Association (January 2019)

# **SECDC LOS FOR SB 256.pdf**

Uploaded by: Snyder, Kari

Position: FAV



## SOUTHEAST

community development corporation

3323 Eastern Avenue, Suite 200

Baltimore, MD 21224

410-342-3234 | 410-342-1719 fax

[www.southeastcdc.org](http://www.southeastcdc.org)

Delores Kelley, Chair  
Maryland State Finance Committee

Re: SB 526

On behalf of the Highlandtown Arts & Entertainment District, I write today in support of SB 526, which revises and updates definitions related to A&E Districts to clarify which artists are eligible for the state's income tax subtraction modification.

The Highlandtown Arts & Entertainment District is Baltimore City's largest geographic district. Approximately 65 artists live or work here. These artists are painters, sculptors, screen printers, muralists, photographers, potters, writers, jewelry makers, tattoo artists, and more. The district is home to six art galleries, all of which developed creative ways to operate through the pandemic, including outdoor events, virtual gallery tours, and by-appointment-only in-person tours. As of 2020, there are more than 25 pieces of public art spread throughout the district's three neighborhoods, and the district's events and assets are listed among the top reasons residents choose to buy a home in the area.

The Highlandtown Arts & Entertainment District is operated by the Southeast Community Development Corporation, whose staff collaborate with district stakeholders to coordinate events, plan marketing promotions, renovate galleries and arts businesses, install murals, and provide resources to artists and arts organizations. Southeast CDC staff work closely with Maryland State Arts Council to share state-level resources with our district partners. Maryland State Arts Council staff played a key role in assisting Baltimore City's A&E districts in garnering the attention of Baltimore City, which has since funded the A&E districts and provided coordination among the districts and with other city agencies.

Tax incentives are one of the tools we use to leverage the arts for community and economic revitalization as they provide significant support to individual artists who are the essence of our district. We support SB 256 because the updates to the definitions of artistic activities allow us to better communicate this support to entrepreneurs who produce art and strengthen the cultural fabric that attracts investment to our neighborhoods and city. We have been part of the discussions over the last few years that produced these updates and are pleased to see them presented for consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kari Snyder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kari Snyder  
Executive Director