



TOWN OF BEL AIR

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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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,



Angela Robertson

Economic Development Coordinator / Arts & Entertainment District Manager