



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