



**LETTER OF SUPPORT ON BEHALF OF  
MARYLAND TOURISM COALITION**

**IN SUPPORT OF SB0210 COVID-19 CLAIM – CIVIL IMMUNITY**

Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, January 26, 2021

Dear Chairman & Committee Members,

My name is Ruth Toomey, Executive Director of Maryland Tourism Coalition, a 50-year old organization that represents the various services, attractions, organizations and accommodations that make up the State's Industry. MTC is the voice of our state's diverse tour and travel community, bringing together the entire industry to enhance business growth and to promote Maryland as a first-class destination for visitors. On behalf of our 1,000+ members, I would like to express our support of SB0210.

Tourism is vital to Maryland's economy! In a typical year, tourism supports 226,000 direct and indirect jobs, making it the 11<sup>th</sup> largest industry in the state. Visitors to Maryland spend nearly \$18.6 billion in Maryland each year and those same visitors generate close to \$2.6 billion in state and local taxes. Without tourism in the state of Maryland, each household would pay \$1,175 more in local taxes.

But as we all well know, this past year has been anything but typical. Our industry was among the hardest hit due to the pandemic. Many of our members have been forced to close and some are even now unable to reopen. 95% of all tourism businesses are small businesses and many are hanging on by a thread. The immunity this bill provides will help protect businesses from spurious claims that may end up putting them out of business permanently. MTC is in favor of additional protection that gives employers immunity for COVID claims for injuries sustained between 3/5/20 through 180 days after the lifting of the emergency COVID order provided all local, state, and federal rules regarding COVID safety were followed for all our members.

On behalf of the Maryland Tourism Coalition, we respectfully request that you support SB0210.

Sincerely,

*Ruth Toomey*

Ruth Toomey  
MTC Executive Director