

**MHLA**  
Maryland Hotel  
Lodging Association

**HB 508 - Support  
COVID-19 Claim – Civil Immunity  
Judiciary Committee  
February 3, 2021**

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Committee:

As the sole statewide trade association dedicated to advocacy for Maryland's lodging industry, with more than 700 hotels totaling 75,000+ rooms, we urge a favorable report on HB 508.

The COVID-19 virus continues to rage throughout Maryland and the country, presenting once-in-a-generation public health and economic challenges. Despite these difficulties, the development and distribution of vaccines give new hope for a future free of the crushing social and economic effects of the virus. Unfortunately, for hotels who have remained on the front lines and continue to serve our communities during this pandemic, the threat of unfair litigation continues to loom. In 2020, over \$23 million was spent by plaintiffs' firms on COVID-19-related lawsuit advertisements, a clear indication that a litigation wave is lurking.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels responded to the very appropriate call for face coverings and other protective steps. [Safe Stay Guidelines](#), created by an advisory council comprised of leaders from all segments of the hotel industry in accordance with CDC best practices and insights from leading health and cleaning experts, have been embraced and adopted by the industry. We should not have to worry that our efforts on behalf of our guests, employees and communities-at-large - State and self-driven - will invite costly and unnecessary litigation.

**We believe it is incumbent upon you as policy makers to ensure that unfair lawsuits will not hamper those who work to comply with applicable government guidelines. HB 508 is limited in duration and scope in addition to preserving reasonable recourse for those harmed by truly bad actors.** Protection from unfair and harmful lawsuits for hotels who continue to serve Maryland communities during this pandemic is critical to recovery for our industry and Maryland's economy moving forward.

Please give a favorable report to HB 508.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Rohrer, CAE  
President & CEO