



March 23, 2021

Senate Bill 529

**Anne Arundel County - Hotel Tax Alterations -
Distribution of Revenue
House Ways and Means Committee**

Position: FAVORABLE

Senate Bill 529 grants Anne Arundel County the ability to provide oversight to private organizations that receive a mandated distribution from County hotel tax revenue, while maintaining the existing funding formula that our County partners rely on to do their work.

The Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitors Bureau (“Visitors Bureau”) and the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County, Inc. (“Arts Council”) are critical partners for the County. As the destination marketing organization for Anne Arundel, the Visitor’s Bureau helps to generate revenues for the local economy by promoting the County and the Chesapeake Bay to leisure and business travelers across the country and around the world. The Arts Council is the premier resource of the cultural arts community in the County, advocating for and generating investment in the visual arts, performing arts, and historic preservation. Under this Bill, the County will continue to provide the current distribution of 17% of the County hotel tax to the Visitor’s Bureau and 3% to the Arts Council.

The County has an obligation to ensure that public funds are used responsibly. However, current law limits the County’s ability to oversee the hotel tax revenue distributed to the Visitors Bureau and the Arts Council. This Bill would require the funding distributions to be appropriated through the County budget each year, authorize the County Auditor to audit the financial records of the Visitors Bureau and the Arts Council, and allow the County Council to withhold funding from appropriation under certain circumstances.

This Bill will ensure that the County Auditor and the County Council are legally able to provide the oversight our residents deserve. For those reasons, I request a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 529.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steuart Pittman".

Steuart Pittman
County Executive