



Testimony offered on behalf of:
THE GARRETT COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

FAVORABLE:
HB 1176 – Income Tax - Credit for Travel, Hospitality, and Entertainment Expenses

Ways and Means Committee
February 26, 2021

On behalf of the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, representing 600 member organizations in Western Maryland, I write to express our support of **HB 1176 – Income Tax - Credit for Travel, Hospitality, and Entertainment Expenses**.

Maryland's tourism industry has been severely battered by the pandemic. As the 11th largest industry in the state, it is imperative to our economic recovery that we enlist all means necessary to support tourism. In Garrett County, tourism accounts for \$315 million in visitor spending, has a total economic impact of \$360.5 million and supports more than 3,000 jobs. For this reason, we have requested this bill to incentivize travel in Maryland that will inject money back into some of the most vulnerable businesses in the state and help retain the jobs in this industry that are in jeopardy.

HB 1176 provides state income tax credits to Marylanders who travel within the state and spend money on hospitality related purchases. In-state travel must occur at least 50 miles from their permanent residence, and purchases must include:

- Food and beverage
- Lodging
- Transportation
- Tickets for live entertainment and sporting events
- or expenses related to attending a conference or business meeting

The tax credit would be up to \$4,000 for an individual; or \$8,000 for a married couple filing jointly; and \$500 per dependent child.

This is an income tax credit and can only be received if money is expended. Therefore, the tax credit is offset by money being put back into the economy, which is desperately needed, especially for businesses that have been hurt so badly by the pandemic.

In turn, the expenditures generate additional tax revenues in the form of sales taxes, accommodations taxes and admissions & amusement taxes. The multiplier effect is significant and the program does not discriminate. It has broad applicability for all tourism businesses.

Tourism needs our help and the Chamber respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 1176**.

Sincerely,

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President & CEO

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