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Maryland Stadium Authority  
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Baltimore, MD 21201  
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Maryland Stadium Authority - Letter of Support  
HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

The Honorable, Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
The Honorable, Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair

Written Testimony, Letter of Support

Thomas Kelso, Chairman, Maryland Stadium Authority  
Michael J. Frenz, Executive Director, Maryland Stadium Authority

Good afternoon, Chairs McIntosh and Chang and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee, I am Thomas Kelso, the Chairman with Michael J. Frenz, the Executive Director of the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) and we appreciate the opportunity to provide this written Letter of Support for HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022.

To further establish Maryland as a premier destination for sports, HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022, through the MSA, authorizes MSA to issue up to \$200 million to fund the development and /or renovations of sports entertainment facilities across the state including minor league ballparks where renovations will be necessary in order to maintain affiliations with major league teams and continue to play ball in our state. Proceeds allocated from the Maryland state lottery, up to \$25 million annually, would be used to pay debt service on the bonds issued to finance the various projects. This new fund also could be utilized by other sports entertainment venues such as equestrian centers, multi-use sports complexes and now venues for youth and amateur sports tournaments.

With the amendment to this bill, recreational facilities are eligible for funding if an economic and feasibility study demonstrates positive economic impact to the State of Maryland. The amendment also creates a one-time \$10 million Major Sports and Entertainment Grant funded from **the state lottery to support Maryland's efforts to attract** and retain world-class sporting events such as the Baltimore-Maryland FIFA World Cup 2026 bid, the CIAA tournament, BMW Championship, Army-Navy game and Ironman events. Of note, \$10 million is the initial deposit, thereafter an annual appropriation for the amount is needed to return it to that level.

Sports tourism is a major component of **Maryland's** tourism and travel industry. In the post-COVID recovery, sport tourism was amongst first in the travel industry to return, in particular youth and amateur sports that generates over \$225 million in direct spending annually for **Maryland's** economy.

The beloved minor league ballparks located in Aberdeen, Bowie, Frederick, Hagerstown,

Salisbury and Waldorf offer year-round budget-friendly family entertainment and inspire economic development in those six counties in Maryland. These minor league teams provide benefits to their communities and promote synergies between the Orioles and their Maryland-based affiliates. According to the Major League Baseball Research Data Portal, since 2005, there have been 14.3 million visitors to Maryland communities through Orioles minor league operations. The minor league ballparks, and other sports and facilities across the state create jobs and generate visitor spending with the resulting **tax revenues reinvested to fund essential citizen services and improve Marylander's** quality of life.

In closing, HB0897 - Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022, further elevates Maryland as a sports and entertainment destination by investing in our facilities to maintain our professional teams, **support Maryland's attraction and retention of major** sports events, promote healthy lifestyles and create business opportunities across the state for years to come.

For the reasons expressed in this letter, we respectfully request a favorable report on HB 897.



March 11, 2022

**House Bill 897**

*Maryland Stadium Authority – Sports and Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022*

**Written Testimony: Support & With Proposed Amendments:**

Dear Delegate McIntosh and Appropriations Committee,

My name is Terry Hasseltine and I am the President of the Sport and Entertainment Corporation of Maryland. I am writing on behalf of the Sport and Entertainment Corporation of Maryland today - an organization that represents and supports several major events in Maryland. As we continue to battle the effects to COVID-19, we recognize that any support for Camden Yards will be a huge benefit to our sports eco-system. We urge you all to support increasing the debt cap listed in HB 896 as well as the joint legislation, HB897 as amended.

In order to address the long-term future of the stadiums legislation was introduced to increase the debt cap from \$235 million to \$1.2 billion. Companion legislation was also introduced to create a \$200 million fund to promote the development of sports entertainment facilities across the state, including minor league stadiums and other critical sport tourism facility assets. These minor league teams and facilities provide economic benefits to communities and promote synergies with professional teams and major event opportunities.

With the ballpark upgrades now required by the recent reorganization, Maryland's minor league teams will maintain their big league affiliations' and continue to play ball in our state. The minor leagues serve as a year- round training hub for professional baseball and creates a robust pipeline of talent for the majors. The ballparks located in Aberdeen, Bowie, Frederick, Hagerstown, Salisbury and Waldorf offer year-round budget-friendly family entertainment and generate economic impact in those six local communities in Maryland.

HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022, through the MSA, is an initiative to help fund the much needed capital improvements at the many sport tourism assets across the state that are critical to our efforts to bring major events to Maryland to spur our economy.

With the amendments proposed, we can expand opportunities in those facilities as well as grow and support other opportunities outside of just baseball like; soccer, equestrian, cycling,



softball, rugby, cricket and lacrosse to name a few. In addition, the amendment allows the Maryland Stadium Authority through Maryland Sports to compete for and support major events on a level playing field against our competition sets. The major event world is extremely competitive and the competition for these events is only getting tougher especially as they have shown once again their resiliency to tough economic times.

As we compete with surrounding states to attract visitors, investing in our assets is critical. We know the resiliency of this amazing community and we look forward to your support moving forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. H. [unclear]', written over a white background.

President



# BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
Room 121, Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

15 March 2022

**RE: HB 897 – Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022 – SUPPORT**

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express Harford County's **SUPPORT** for **HB 897 – Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022**.

To further establish Maryland as a premier destination for sports, this legislation will create a \$200 million fund to promote the development of sports entertainment facilities across the state, including minor league stadiums where renovations will be necessary to maintain affiliations with major league teams and continue to play ball in our state. Proceeds allocated from the Maryland state lottery, up to \$25 million annually, would be used to pay debt service on the bonds issued to finance the various projects. This new fund also could be utilized by other sports entertainment venues such as equestrian centers, multi-use sports complexes and venues for youth and amateur sports tournaments.

The ballparks located in Aberdeen, Bowie, Frederick, Hagerstown, Salisbury and Waldorf offer year-round budget-friendly family entertainment and inspire economic development in those six counties in Maryland. These minor league teams provide benefits to their communities and promote synergies between the Orioles and their Maryland-based affiliates. According to the Major League Baseball Research Data Portal, since 2005 there have been **14.3 million visitors to Maryland communities through Orioles minor league operations**. The minor league ballparks, and other sports and facilities across the state, create jobs and generate visitor spending with the resulting tax revenues reinvested to fund essential citizen services and improve Marylander's quality of life.

In our great County of Harford, where we are proud to be home of the Aberdeen IronBirds, MLB Data has shown that from 2005 through 2019, **nearly 3 million fans have come to Harford County and Aberdeen** to enjoy the experience of an IronBirds game and our County.

This legislation when enacted will unquestionably further elevate Maryland as a premier sports and entertainment destination by investing in our facilities to maintain our professional teams, promote healthy lifestyles, and create business opportunities across the state for years to come. For the reasons expressed in this letter, we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on HB 897.

Sincerely,

Barry Glassman, Harford County Executive

*MARYLAND'S NEW CENTER OF OPPORTUNITY*

410.638.3350 | TTY Maryland Relay 711 | [www.harfordcountymd.gov](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov)

220 South Main Street, Bel Air, Maryland 21014

THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT UPON REQUEST



Jack A. Graham  
General Manager  
Ripken Professional Baseball LLC  
d/b/a Aberdeen IronBirds

Maryland General Assembly  
90 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

Thank you for your consideration of the legislation before you, House Bill 897, Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022. As you know, the game of baseball is modernizing rapidly, and many local municipally owned stadiums are being forced to improve and upgrade their player development and fan-facing resources to meet the demands of the modern game. The Maryland Stadium Authority, acting on behalf of many facilities facing these challenges, has the support of the Aberdeen IronBirds, Advanced-A Baltimore Orioles affiliate, located in Harford County. As we celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the field's first game this year, there are many ways in which it will need to adapt and change for our next two decades along with our municipal partner, the City of Aberdeen.

During our stadium's time in Aberdeen, it has been a source of player development for future stars in Camden Yards and across Major League Baseball, as well as a source of employment and tax revenue, but most importantly Ripken Stadium is a community gathering place for entertainment, celebration, public need, and making memories as a family right here in Harford County, Maryland. To continue contributing in these capacities as baseball changes, much about the facility can be improved for the public good and for the good of the game. The IronBirds are appreciative of the state's previous assistance with improving the facility, including safety railing, synthetic turf, and sports lighting, and hopeful for future improvements.

As the owners of the facility, the City of Aberdeen recently had an assessment conducted by engineering firm EwingCole. The assessment acted not only as a measurement of the condition of the stadium's systems and structures, but also of its compliance with Major League Baseball facility requirements. The assessment revealed many areas where the features of the facility do not meet the expectations laid out by Major League Baseball. A pool of financial resources as proposed in HB 897 would undoubtedly be a source of relief for a small municipality and us as their tenant in completing these necessary changes. The IronBirds are intent on continuing to support local professional minor league baseball in this public facility, in both entertainment and economic capacities, and appreciate the support afforded by the MSA, the General Assembly, and the people of Maryland.

On behalf of our team's ownership, the Ripken family, we ask that you make HB 897 a component of protecting Maryland's legacy in the game of baseball as well as the resources of its communities.

Respectfully,

Jack A. Graham  
General Manager

Aberdeen IronBirds  
Leidos Field at Ripken Stadium  
873 Long Dr.  
Aberdeen, MD 21001



Jack Graham  
D: 443-327-8061  
jgraham@ironbirdsbaseball.com



## WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

P.O. BOX 870

SALISBURY, MARYLAND 21803-0870

410-548-4801

FAX: 410-548-4803

John D. Psota  
Acting County Executive

March 7, 2022

The Honorable Delegate Maggie McIntosh  
Appropriations Committee Chair  
121 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Blade Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB897

Dear Delegate McIntosh and Committee Members:

This letter is in support of HB897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022. This bill would authorize the Stadium Authority to issue bonds for certain sports entertainment facilities.

We are pleased to support this legislative bill which could support future improvements at facilities such as Arthur W. Perdue Stadium, home to the Delmarva Shorebirds, an affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles. The Delmarva Shorebirds provide a wonderful opportunity for our community and the counties surrounding Wicomico County. Including minor league baseball, the stadium hosts over 100 events each year which attract an annual attendance of 240,000, generates an estimated \$13.4M in local economic activity, and yields over \$600,000 in State tax revenue annually.

Stadium improvements will be required in order to keep the Shorebirds affiliated with the Orioles and HB897 offers support to communities such as ours as we strive to keep economic and quality of life assets in Maryland.

We thank you for your time and consideration of this letter of support. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 410-548-4801.

Respectfully,

WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John D. Psota". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

John D. Psota  
Acting County Executive



DELMARVA SHOREBIRDS BASEBALL CLUB  
Class "A" Affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles

March 9, 2022

The Honorable, Chair, Delegate Maggie McIntosh  
The Honorable, Vice Chair, Delegate Mark S. Chang  
Appropriations Committee  
Room 121  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support - HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

Madam Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

As general manager of the Delmarva Shorebirds and Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury, Maryland, we fully support HB0897 - Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022 that further elevate Maryland as a sports destination by investing in our award-winning facilities to maintain our professional teams, serve our communities and create business opportunities across the State for years to come.

To further establish Maryland as a premier destination for sports, the Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022, through the MSA, is an initiative to help fund much needed capital improvements at Minor League Baseball (MiLB) ballparks across the state, and at other sports facilities.

With ballpark upgrades now required by Major League Baseball's (MLB) recent reorganization of its minor leagues, this bill will help Maryland's minor league teams to maintain their Major League Baseball affiliations and continue to play ball in our state. The ballparks located in Aberdeen, Bowie, Frederick, Hagerstown, Salisbury, and Waldorf offer year-round budget-friendly family entertainment and generate economic impact in six local communities in Maryland. Year-round events at the MiLB ballparks create jobs and generate sports, leisure and business visitor spending with the resulting tax revenues reinvested to fund essential citizen services and improve Marylander's quality of life.

In addition to MiLB games, year-round usage of these facilities for other sports, concerts, festivals plus corporate events, non-profit fundraisers, social occasions, and family functions, further contribute to the value of the ballparks to their communities.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the Delmarva Shorebirds and Arthur W. Perdue Stadium were transformed into a community center that included, testing and vaccination sites to serve Marylanders in need. As allowed during the COVID-19 crisis, we served as a place of normalcy for the community. The team and facility hosted virtual community engagement events, and as allowed in-person events that included youth baseball tournaments, drive-in firework shows, socially distant outdoor movie nights, graduation ceremonies for Wicomico County High Schools, Wor-Wic Community College, and several other events to support and raise funds for our community non-profit organizations.



DELMARVA SHOREBIRDS BASEBALL CLUB  
Class "A" Affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles

With the economic impact, prestige, and civic pride of being home to the Baltimore Orioles Single-A Affiliate, the Delmarva Shorebirds, players and personnel support numerous non-profits, schools, churches with service on local boards, donations, fundraisers, and appearances in the community throughout the year. Annually we raise funds and make monetary donations to area non-profits through our Fly Together Fund at the Community Foundation and donate thousands of tickets to families that may not otherwise be afforded the ability to attend a professional baseball game.

According to MLB Research Data Portal home game attendance numbers for the Delmarva Shorebirds, the team brought 3.2 million visitors to Salisbury, Md 2005 - 2019. In addition, our non-game day stadium usage draws tens of thousands of visitors annually for events such as Delmarva Bike and national youth sporting events in conjunction with Wicomico County Tourism.

The Baltimore Orioles MiLB affiliations stretch the team's influence across the state with Double-A Bowie Baysox, High-A Aberdeen IronBirds, and Low-A Delmarva Shorebirds. There have been 14.3 million visitors to Maryland communities through Orioles minor league operations since 2005 (FYI the 2020 season was canceled due to COVID). These MiLB teams create a robust pipeline of talent and promote synergies between the Baltimore Orioles and inspire future fans in the stands at Camden Yards.

For the reasons expressed in this letter, we request a favorable report on HB0897 - Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022.

Respectfully,

*Chris Bitters*

Chris Bitters  
General Manager  
Delmarva Shorebirds  
Arthur W. Perdue Stadium

cc:

Senator Mary Beth Carozza  
Delegate Wayne A. Hartman  
Delegate Carl Anderton, Jr.  
Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes  
Delegate Christopher T. Adams  
Delegate Johnny Mautz  
Delegate Charles J. Otto

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401



Subject: Letter in support of House Bill 897

2/25/2022

Dear Chairman McIntosh:

In our efforts to maintain Minor League Baseball in Bowie, we are humbly requesting support for House Bill 897. The funds proposed in this bill will be used to achieve the following goals:

- Repair and replace stadium and site infrastructure and systems which are failing or have outlived normal life expectancy.
- Improve stadium and site to meet both current and future Major League Baseball and Baltimore Orioles standards.
- Maximize and improve the stadium site for year-round use by both local and out-of-state visitors.
- Keep Minor League Baseball in Bowie, Maryland.

Working jointly with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), we have maintained the Class AA affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles in Maryland since 1994. Our partnership with MNCPPC has enabled us to keep the stadium and site functioning smoothly during the past 27 years. The landscape of Minor League Baseball and professional sports stadiums in general, however, has changed drastically over the decades, and over the past two years in particular. We have a plan to reimagine the stadium and site to best serve Major League Baseball, the Baltimore Orioles, the Bowie Baysox, and the citizens of Maryland. We believe our plan will achieve all of those ends in a fiscally efficient manner.

Our plan, thoughtfully developed in consultation with the MNCPPC, will help transform the Prince George's Stadium and site into a year-round entertainment destination and position the Bowie Baysox organization for long-term success in Maryland. Patron traffic to our stadium and site could significantly improve with the successful implementation, serving as a catalyst for growth and economic opportunities for the region and state.

Thank you for your consideration of support for House Bill 897. I stand by to answer any questions that may arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Shallcross'.

Brian Shallcross  
General Manager  
Bowie Baysox Baseball Club

Cc: The Honorable Geraldine Valentino-Smith

---

Double-A Eastern League Affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles

Prince George's Stadium  
4101 N.E. Crain Highway • Bowie, Maryland 20716  
(T) 301-805-6000 (F) 301-464-4911  
www.baysox.com



March 15, 2022

Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
121 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Madam Chair:

I am writing on behalf of the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs to voice our support for **HB 897 – Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022**. The Sports Entertainment Facilities Financing Fund proposed by the bill would provide tremendous aid to our ballpark. The Blue Crabs’ stadium is now thirteen years old and in need of many repairs. Currently, the Blue Crabs have the only professional ballpark in Maryland that has not received any state grants or financial support since it was built in 2008. These matters have been further complicated by the global pandemic which saw a full year of lost revenue for the ballpark.

Despite the difficulties, the Blue Crabs stayed involved in the community. The stadium served as a dedicated Covid-19 testing and mass vaccination site. We also created a “Community Showcase Summer” with 92 summer events that was hosted in 2020 including:

- Blue Crabs Youth Baseball Camps (with over 700 kids registered), movie nights, and youth baseball;
- food banks;
- regional toys-for-tots holiday distribution;
- American Red Cross Blood Drive; and
- virtual book readings for school children among other activities.

The Blue Crabs have since returned to the field, but we want to ensure that our stadium can support both the future of our team and the community. The Southern Maryland Blue Crabs are hopeful that the funds proposed in this bill will allow us to repair, renovate, and build out our stadium for the future. We look forward to supporting our team and our community to make our ballpark a centerpiece for Southern Maryland.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to the State of Maryland and we respectfully request a favorable report on **HB 897 – Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Lavoie".

John Lavoie



## Maryland Soccer Foundation

18031 Central Park Circle

Boyd's, MD 20841

T 301.528.1480

[www.mdsoccerplex.org](http://www.mdsoccerplex.org)



March 10, 2022

### House Bill 897

*Maryland Stadium Authority – Sports and Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022*

#### **Written Testimony: Support & With Proposed Amendments:**

Dear Delegate McIntosh and Appropriations Committee,

My name is Matt Libber, and I am the Executive Director of the Maryland SoccerPlex and Adventist HealthCare Fieldhouse in Montgomery County. I am also currently the Chair of TEAM Maryland, the sports marketing collective of the Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) within Maryland, as well as serve on the Board of Directors for the Sports Events and Tourism Association (SportsETA), the trade group for sports tourism organizations. Wearing all three of these hats provides great perspective on the impact that House Bill 897 would have on the economy of Maryland, and we urge you to support both House Bill 896 and 897, as amended.

Tourism is major part of the Maryland Economy and affects every part of the State, from the mountains of Garrett County, to the I-95 Corridor, and to the communities on the Eastern Shore and Ocean City. Sports tourism is major component of the tourism industry. In the post-COVID recovery, sport tourism was the first industry to return, which, in turn, touches so many other businesses in the hospitality and retail sectors. Sports travelers, event organizers, and venues spent \$45.1 billion in 2019, which generated \$103.3 billion in business sales when including indirect and induced impacts, according to a 2020 report from Tourism Economics. In Maryland youth and amateur sports generates over \$225 million in direct spending for our economy. Investments by the State in sports tourism pay for themselves in the economic impact and development around sports. For every \$1 spent on tourism advertising \$31 flows back into the State Economy.

This pair of bills allow Maryland to remain at the forefront of a highly competitive market. Allowing the Stadium Authority to make additional investments in our professional stadiums help showcase the State to the larger sports market. Providing funding for additional funding for investment in the creation of new sports venue assets and improvements to existing assets will provide our communities across the State to continue the work they have already done to bring world class sporting events to Maryland. Please support House Bill 896 and 897 to continue to make Maryland a sports destination.

Respectfully,

Matthew Libber  
Executive Director  
Maryland Soccer Foundation  
Maryland SoccerPlex  
[mllibber@mdsoccerplex.org](mailto:mllibber@mdsoccerplex.org)  
301-528-1480 (o)  
443-474-3713 (c)

**MHILA**  
Maryland Hotel  
Lodging Association

**SUPPORT**

**HB896 - Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards  
HB897 - Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022**

March 15, 2022

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang & Honorable Members of the Appropriations 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 support HB896 and HB897.

In order to address the long-term future of the stadiums, HB896 was introduced to increase the debt cap from \$235 million to \$1.2 billion, with \$600 million allocated to each stadium. To service the debt, the amount allocated from lottery proceeds will be capped at \$90 million from the current \$20 million. These improvements are designed to increase the economic impact of the stadiums for the State, the City, and the teams.

Companion legislation, HB897, was also introduced to create a \$200 million fund to promote the development of sports entertainment facilities across the state, including minor league stadiums where renovations will be necessary to maintain affiliations with major league teams. These minor league teams provide economic benefits to communities and promote synergies between the Orioles and their Maryland-based affiliates.

HB 896 and HB 897 would elevate the state as a sports tourism destination. Camden Yards Sports Complex is a valuable year-round community asset that helps to generate hotel stays and support jobs in Baltimore City and the surrounding areas. The minor league ballparks located in Aberdeen, Bowie, Frederick, Hagerstown, Salisbury and Waldorf do the same in those six local communities.

It is the desire of our members for these stadiums to remain competitive as best-in-class facilities to keep baseball teams and fans here in Maryland. Hotel guests spend \$5B annually throughout the state and hotels generate \$602M in state and local tax. Our industry provides great economic benefit to local communities when hotels are full. In fact, every 10 occupied rooms per night supports nearly 25 local jobs.

For the reasons expressed in this letter, we request a favorable report on HB H96 & HB 897.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Rohrer, CAE  
President & CEO



March 4, 2022

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the  
House Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: HB897 – Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022**

Dear Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the House Appropriations  
Committee:

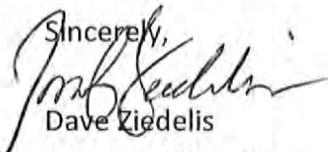
On behalf of Visit Frederick (the Tourism Council of Frederick County), the designated  
destination marketing organization for Frederick County, MD, please accept this letter of  
support for HB897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act.

HB897 will provide much needed capital improvement support to our minor league  
baseball facilities across Maryland. All of these facilities are invaluable community assets  
that host countless other public, youth, school, non-profit, and municipal activities and  
events in addition to minor league baseball. They are pillars of our communities, drivers  
of our local economies, produce substantial tax dollars, and lead directly to dramatic  
increases in outside visitation along with the related and critical economic impact.

Prior to my time as Executive Director of Visit Frederick, I had the pleasure of a 33-year  
career in professional baseball, including 17-years as the General Manager of the  
Frederick Keys and Harry Grove Stadium. The Keys brought 4.4 million visitors to  
Frederick during my tenure and I know first-hand the great needs of our minor league  
facilities – and the immense positive impact this bill will bring to our communities.

We also hope that this bill will lead to the return of a full-season MLB affiliate to  
Frederick, MD. The Keys were a long-standing Baltimore Orioles affiliate for over 30  
years, however, they were designated to the short-season MLB Draft League two-years  
ago as a direct result of their antiquated and substandard facility.

We encourage everyone on the Appropriations Committee to support HB897. Thank you

Sincerely,  
  
Dave Ziedelis  
Executive Director

Cc: Delegate Carol Krimm, District 3A Frederick County, Appropriations Committee  
Member



March 10, 2022

Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair, and Committee Members  
Maryland House Appropriations Committee  
Room 121 House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 897: Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

POSITION: Support

Dear Delegate McIntosh & Committee Members:

I am writing to express Downtown Frederick Partnership's support for HB 897: Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022. The Partnership is a historic preservation based, economic development nonprofit that works to enhance, promote and preserve the vitality, livability and diversity of Downtown Frederick, a national Main Street community.

Recent changes by Major League Baseball highlight the need to make capital improvements in Minor League Baseball ballparks. Harry Grove Stadium, located to the south of Downtown Frederick, is home to the Frederick Keys. For more than 30 years, the Keys were the Baltimore Orioles affiliate. This affiliation was lost two years ago and the conditions at the stadium were a significant factor in that decision.

While not in Downtown Frederick, the proximity of the baseball stadium creates a positive symbiotic relationship. Game day visitors often make a trip to Downtown Frederick to shop and/or eat as a part of their ballpark experience. A better stadium also creates the potential to host more activities outside of the regular baseball season. Increased activation of the stadium is a positive for Downtown Frederick. Investing in these smaller ballparks creates an opportunity to generate additional economic activity.

In summary, the Partnership is a strong supporter of the proposed legislation and looks forward to the resulting ballpark improvements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Kara Norman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kara Norman, AICP; Executive Director



Maryland General Assembly  
90 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

**Executive Director**

Matthew Scales

**Executive Board**

Jay Ellenby  
President

Stacy Rutherford  
Vice President

Tim Engle  
Treasurer

Lauri Altman  
Secretary

**Board Members**

Kim Austing  
Kathy Burley  
Phyllis Grover  
Trish Heidenreich  
Craig Lanphear  
Lauren Morris  
Lauri Orzewicz  
Alex Patel  
Beth Rhudy  
Angela Rose

First and foremost, thank you for your consideration of the legislation before you, House Bill 897, Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022. Like most other sports, the game of baseball is modernizing quickly, which leaves many local municipally owned stadiums forced to improve and upgrade their player development and fan-facing resources to meet the demands of the modern game. The Maryland Stadium Authority, acting on behalf of many facilities that face these challenges, has the support of Visit Harford, Inc. As you may know, Harford County is home to the Aberdeen IronBirds, an Advanced-A Baltimore Orioles affiliate, who play at Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen, Maryland.

During the Ripken Stadium’s time in Aberdeen, it has been a source of player development for future stars in Camden Yards and across Major League Baseball, as well as a community gathering place for entertainment, celebration, public need, employment, and tax revenue. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ripken Stadium stepped up to the plate to host a mass vaccination and testing site, partnering with the State of Maryland Health Department.

To continue in this capacity as baseball changes, much about the facility needs to be improved. The IronBirds are appreciative of the state’s previous assistance with improving the facility, including safety railing, synthetic turf, and sports lighting, and hopeful for future improvements as well.

As the Ripken Stadium celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the stadium facility’s recent assessment does not meet expectations of the Major League Baseball facility requirements. The pool of financial resources as proposed in HB 897 would undoubtedly be a source of relief for a small municipality and their tenants. The IronBirds are intent on continuing to support local professional minor league baseball in this public facility, in both entertainment and economic capacities, and appreciate the support afforded by the MSA, the General Assembly, and the people of Maryland. Visit Harford requests that you make HB 897 a component of protecting Maryland’s baseball legacy as well as the resources of its communities.

Respectfully,

Matthew Scales  
Executive Director  
Visit Harford



March 7, 2022  
The Honorable Delegate McIntosh  
121 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB897 - *MARYLAND STADIUM AUTHORITY* – Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

Dear Delegate McIntosh and Appropriations Committee,

My name is Kristin Hanna and I am the legislative chair for the Maryland Tourism Coalition as well as the Senior Director of Marketing for Flying Dog Brewery. I am writing on behalf of Maryland Tourism Coalition today - an organization that represents tourism and hospitality businesses in Maryland. As we continue to battle the effects to COVID-19, we recognize that any support for Camden Yards will be a huge benefit to our entire eco-system. We urge you all to support increasing the debt cap listed in HB 896 as well as the joint legislation, HB897.

In order to address the long-term future of the stadiums, legislation was introduced to increase the debt cap from \$235 million to \$1.2 billion. Companion legislation was also introduced to create a \$200 million fund to promote the development of sports entertainment facilities across the state, including minor league stadiums where renovations will be necessary in order to maintain affiliations with major league teams. These minor league teams provide economic benefits to communities and promote synergies between the Orioles and their Maryland-based affiliates.

HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022, through the MSA, is an initiative to help fund the much needed capital improvements at the many Minor League Baseball ballparks across the state and other sports facilities. With the ballpark upgrades now required by the recent reorganization, Maryland's minor league teams will maintain their big league affiliations' and continue to play ball in our state. The minor leagues serve as a year-round training hub for professional baseball and creates a robust pipeline of talent for the majors. The ballparks located in Aberdeen, Bowie, Frederick, Hagerstown, Salisbury and Waldorf offer year-round budget-friendly family entertainment and generate economic impact in those six local communities in Maryland.

As we compete with surrounding states to attract visitors, investing in our assets is critical. We know the resiliency of this amazing community and we look forward to your support moving forward.

Sincerely,

Kristin Hanna

Kristin Hanna  
MTC Legislative Chair  
Flying Dog Senior Director of Marketing  
[kristin.hanna@flyingdog.com](mailto:kristin.hanna@flyingdog.com)  
480-710-2920

March 8, 2022

William P. Jones  
4 Farview Road  
Baltimore MD 21212  
410-206-8326

The Honorable, Chair, Delegate Maggie McIntosh  
The Honorable, Vice Chair, Delegate Mark S. Chang  
Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support - HB 896 Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards and HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

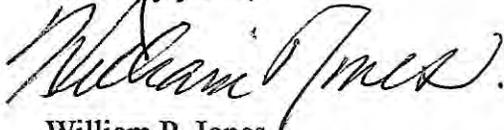
To Madam Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing this letter to demonstrate my support for HB 896 Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards and HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022. The funds that would be made available would insure that both the Baltimore Ravens and the Baltimore Orioles will remain in Baltimore Maryland for the foreseeable future.

In 1979, I joined the Orioles Designated Hitters (DH) Club, a volunteer organization whose mission was to help the Orioles establish financial stabilization through the sale of season tickets. The success of the DH Club and other factors were instrumental in Edward Bennett William's decision to keep the Orioles in Baltimore. This resulted in the formation of the Maryland Stadium Authority, the signing of a 30 year lease and the subsequent building of Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

Since 1992, by welcoming approximately 80 million visitors, there has been an estimated \$15.9 billion in total spending at the Camden Yards Sports Complex, with \$9.2 billion attributed to the Baltimore Orioles and \$6.7 billion attributed to the Baltimore Ravens. The passing of these bills will further benefit Baltimore City, the Greater Baltimore Region and the State of Maryland. The direct economic benefit will be in the tens of millions of dollars. The indirect benefits will be immeasurable. For the reasons expressed in this letter, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 896 and HB 897 and am available for any questions that you may have.

Sincerely yours,



William P. Jones  
Past President and CEO, The Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore

March 8, 2022

Harold I. Hackerman  
3304 Redspire Lane  
Pikesville, MD 21208  
[hhackerman@ellinandtucker.com](mailto:hhackerman@ellinandtucker.com)

The Honorable, Chair, Delegate Maggie McIntosh  
The Honorable, Vice Chair, Delegate Mark S. Chang  
Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support - HB 896 Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards and HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

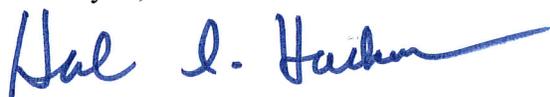
To Madam Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

As a member of the member Orioles Designated Hitters Club (1979-present) and a member of Ravens Scouts (2019 and 2020), a volunteer ticket sales force with the goal of bolstering the team's ticket sales efforts I support HB0896 - Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards and its companion bill, HB0897 - Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022 that reinvests in the state's sports venues which creates jobs, generates economic benefits, encourages visitation and inspires civic pride.

The iconic Camden Yards Sports Complex resulted from visionary leadership and has been a successful investment and an important year-round entertainment and community asset for the greater Baltimore region. Furthermore, the teams stretch their influence across the state with Baltimore Orioles' minor league affiliates in Harford, Wicomico and Prince George's Counties and with the Baltimore Ravens headquarters and state-of-the-art training facility in Baltimore County. This legislation expands on that vision for the next generation and demonstrates Maryland's firm financial commitment to the Baltimore Orioles and the Baltimore Ravens and their respective leagues.

I look forward to celebrating the 30th anniversary of our beloved ballpark with the passage of HB 896 that affords an investment in the Camden Yards Sports Complex for future generations of Marylanders enjoyment and enrichment. You may reach me at any time with any questions.

Thank you,



Harold I. Hackerman  
Member Orioles Designated Hitters Club (1979-present)  
Member of Ravens Scouts (2019-present)

March 8, 2022

Robert J. Cecil  
349 Hopkins Landing Drive  
Essex, MD 21221  
[Bob.Cecil@hotmail.com](mailto:Bob.Cecil@hotmail.com)

The Honorable, Chair, Delegate Maggie McIntosh  
The Honorable, Vice Chair, Delegate Mark S. Chang  
Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Letter of Support - HB 896 Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards and HB 897 Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

To Madam Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

As the retired Director of Sales, Hearst Broadcasting, WBAL Radio, the longtime flagship station of the Orioles and Ravens radio networks, I have firsthand knowledge of the economic impact of our professional sports teams in the greater Baltimore region and across the state and am in support of HB0896 - Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards and its companion bill, HB0897 - Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022 that invests in our award-winning facilities to maintain our professional teams, serve our communities and create business opportunities for years to come.

For 30 years, the Camden Yards Sports Complex has served as a catalyst for economic development for our city and state. Year-round events creates jobs and generates visitor spending with the resulting tax revenues reinvested to fund essential citizen services and improving Marylander's quality of life.

The positive images of our city and our state during broadcasts of home games and the generosity of the teams with year-round support of their communities further contributes to value of Maryland being home of these professional teams.

In closing, HB 896 demonstrates, through the Maryland Stadium Authority, the State's firm financial commitment to the teams as they renew their long-term agreements to stay and play in Baltimore, Maryland. For the reasons expressed in this letter, I offer my support of HB 896 and HB 897 and am available for any questions that you may have.

Thank you,



Robert J. Cecil  
Retired Director of Sales, Hearst Broadcasting, WBAL Radio, Orioles Designated Hitters Club