



February 15, 2022  
Chair Guzzone and Members of the  
Budget & Taxation  
Senate Office Building, 3 West  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: SB541-SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee,

The Maryland Tourism Coalition is in support of SB541 with amendments, which addresses infrastructure, capacity, and accessibility needs within the Maryland Park Service and State parks.

The Maryland Tourism Coalition is the statewide trade association that represents the all sectors of the tourism industry. We connect, educate and advocate on behalf of our members. During the pandemic, Maryland residents and visitors flocked to our State Parks that already had a backlog of items that needed to be addressed to help keep the parks maintained to their best. The abundance of visitors just put more wear and tear on the Park System. Many of the Parks were closed, not because they were at full capacity, but because the parking lots were full, turning many visitors away who drove for hours to get to the destination. We hope they visited another local spot, rather than just turning the car around and going home. MTC hopes through the Great Maryland Outdoors Act that either parking lots can be expanded or provide a shuttle system for a local town to transport the park visitors rather than turning them away. In return, we hope these transported visitors enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, shop at a small business and maybe even make it an overnight and stay at local accommodations.

We do realize that the funding needs to come from somewhere in order to keep this program running. With that, we would like to see a percentage of park entry fees to go into the program to help pay for the maintenance, infrastructure, capacity, and accessibility needs at the state parks.

The Maryland Tourism Coalition asks to please give SB541 a favorable report with amendments.

Thank you in advance and if you have any question, please feel free to contact me directly at 336-254-4648 or [ruth@mdtourism.org](mailto:ruth@mdtourism.org)

Sincerely,

Ruth Toomey

*Ruth Toomey*

Executive Director, Maryland Tourism Coalition