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*Executive Director*

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Maryland Stadium Authority  
The Warehouse at Camden Yards  
333 W. Camden Street, Suite 500  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-333-1560  
1-877-MDSTADIUM  
Fax: 410-333-1888

[www.mdstad.com](http://www.mdstad.com)

Voice: 800-201-7165  
TTY: 800-735-2258

**Maryland Stadium Authority - Letter of Support**

HB 897 Economic Development – Sports Entertainment Facilities and Events, Prince George’s County Blue Line Corridor Facilities, and Racing Facilities

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair

**Written Testimony, Letter of Support**

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

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone and Vice Chair Rosapepe and honorable members of the Budget and Taxation 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 Economic Development – Sports Entertainment Facilities and Events, Prince George’s County Blue Line Corridor Facilities, and Racing Facilities

To further establish Maryland as a premier destination for sports, HB 897, 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, HB 897 Economic Development – Sports Entertainment Facilities and Events, Prince George's County Blue Line Corridor Facilities, and Racing Facilities, 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.



## 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

April 4, 2022

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice-Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West; Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB897

Dear Chairman Guzzone 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,

John D. Psota  
Acting County Executive



# TOWN OF OCEAN CITY

*The White Marlin Capital of the World*

April 5, 2022

Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

## **LETTER OF SUPPORT - House Bill 0897 – SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES ACT OF 2022**

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Distinguished Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

The Town of Ocean City is in support of HB897 as amended. Ocean City and Worcester County have a long-term goal to extend our summer season by offering more year-round activities. We believe sporting events, especially amateur sporting tournaments, are an excellent way to accomplish this goal. We have already seen, with great success, the economic benefit that soccer tournaments, lacrosse tournaments, basketball, wrestling, and volleyball tournaments bring to our area. However, at this time we have outgrown our capacity for expanding these current events or adding additional events. These events attract teams not just from Maryland but also from throughout the Mid-Atlantic area. We already have the local infrastructure in place in the way of hotel rooms, restaurants, and amenities to support a first-class sports complex.

Ocean City and Worcester County are partnering together to create a premier indoor and outdoor athletic complex just outside the city limits. An initial impact study conducted by the Maryland Stadium Authority concluded that such a complex would generate positive incremental tax benefits to the State.

Our successful partnership with the State on the Ocean City Convention Center is the perfect example of how we have been able to implement the strategy of extending our season and provide strong economic benefits to the State and local economy.

House Bill 897, as amended, would help us to take the next step in making this complex a reality and making Ocean City and the State of Maryland the #1 amateur sporting destination on the East Coast.

We respectfully ask for your support of HB897.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Meehan  
Mayor

**MAYOR**  
RICHARD W. MEEHAN

**CITY COUNCIL**

MATTHEW M. JAMES  
*President*

ANTHONY J. DELUCA  
*Secretary*

PETER S. BUAS  
JOHN F. GEHRIG, JR.  
J. FRANKLIN KNIGHT  
LLOYD MARTIN  
MARK L. PADDACK

**CITY MANAGER**  
TERENCE J. MCGEAN, PE

**CITY CLERK**  
DIANA L. CHAVIS, CMC

April 6, 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, golf, 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 read "Terrance Hasseltine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "H" and "S".

Terrance Hasseltine  
President



## Maryland Soccer Foundation

18031 Central Park Circle

Boyd's, MD 20841

T 301.528.1480

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



April 6, 2022

### **House Bill 896**

*Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards*

### **House Bill 896**

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

### **Written Testimony: Support**

Senators Guzzone and Rosapepe and Members of the Budget and Taxation 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 Bills 896 and 897 would have on the economy of Maryland, and we urge you to support both House Bill 896 and 897, as amended.

Tourism is a 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 pays itself through the economic impact and development around sports events. For every \$1.00 spent on tourism advertising \$31.00 flows back into the State Economy. The funding for major events in this bill is important for Maryland to stay on top of an extremely competitive market. Cities and states around the United States have seen the importance of sports tourism and the economic benefits that come with these types of events. Providing the Maryland Sports Commission with the resources to attract major events such as the FIFA World Cup, Army – Navy Game, America's Cup racing, and Major League Baseball's All-Star Game sets us apart from other destinations. These marque events themselves turn into promotional assets showcasing Maryland to the rest of the country and the world.

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 investment in the creation of new sports venue assets, improvements to existing assets, and attracting new events to the State will provide our communities across the State to continue the work they have already done to bring world class sporting events to Maryland.



## Maryland Soccer Foundation

18031 Central Park Circle

Boyd's, MD 20841

T 301.528.1480

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



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On behalf of the Maryland Soccer Foundation and TEAM Maryland, I ask that you support these two important pieces of legislation. Investments like this provide both short-term and long-term benefits to the State economy. Sports tourism has proven time and again to be one of the strongest sectors of the tourism economy of this State. Sports tourism touches so many sectors of the economy its benefits will be felt throughout the State for years to come. Thank you for your consideration and support for sports tourism in Maryland.

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)



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



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



April 5, 2022

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone:

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,

*John J. Lavoie*

John Lavoie



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

April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

To Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation 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.

**MHLA**  
Maryland Hotel  
Lodging Association

**SUPPORT**

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

April 6, 2022

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe & Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation 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



April 5, 2022

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller Senate 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 located within 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 large loop at the beginning.

Kara Norman, AICP; Executive Director



April 4, 2022

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Rosapepe, and Members of the Senate Budget & Taxation 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 the Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022. This Act 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 Act will bring to our communities. We also hope that this Act 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 Senate Budget & Taxation Committee to support the Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Dave Ziedelis  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Ziedelis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the typed name and title.

Cc: Senator Ron Young, District 3 Frederick County, Budget & Taxation Committee  
Member



April 7, 2022

Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller State Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

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**Executive Director**

Matthew Scales

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair,

**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



April 5, 2022

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB0896 - Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards  
HB0987 – Sports Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

Dear Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore (EAGB), I am writing to register our strong support for HB0896. The legislation will increase the cap on debt issuance and debt service from the current limit of \$235M to \$1.2B to be used to improve and enhance the facilities within the Camden Yards Sports Complex. By providing the resources needed for Oriole Park and M&T Stadium to remain competitive top-of-class homes for the Orioles and the Ravens, the State of Maryland will demonstrate their commitment to keeping the teams in Baltimore for years to come.

EAGB is a regional business organization dedicated to marketing the economic assets of the Greater Baltimore region, elevating the Region to a location of choice for employment, investment, and business location. We work in collaboration with our board members and other stakeholders to help catalyze economic opportunities and create pathways that enable residents throughout the region to be able to take advantage of these opportunities.

EAGB's member jurisdictions – Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Howard, Cecil, Carroll, Harford and Baltimore Counties – collaborate on programs and activities that celebrate the strengths of the entire Region, recognizing that the assets of one jurisdiction benefit the others and that Baltimore City is the heart of the Region. A vibrant Camden Yards as the home of two



major league teams is a major asset for the entire Region and a critical element of the City's economic health and vitality.

The Camden Yards Sports Complex was a game changer for stadium development as a catalyst for urban revitalization across the country. More importantly, for over three decades Camden Yards has been a catalyst for economic development resulting in significant economic benefits for Baltimore City, the Greater Baltimore region and the State. This legislation, once passed, will continue this tradition of visionary and future-focused leadership

We also urge approval of HB0897, as amended. Authorizing the Maryland Stadium Authority to issue bonds to assist in advancing the sports and sports entertainment industries throughout the State by financing the acquisition, design and construction of facilities needed for these industries to grow will bring significant direct and indirect economic benefits to the Greater Baltimore region and the entire State.

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and members of the Committee, we urge you to approve HB0896 and HB897. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Whelley', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michele Whelley  
President & CEO

CC: EAGB Board of Directors  
List Attached



## **2022 EAGB BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **OFFICERS**

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1200 Stuart Street, Unit C1B, Baltimore, MD 21230



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**UMBC Training Centers:** Jon Lau, President & CTO  
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**Verizon Communications:** Eric Reed, Vice President – Public Policy & Local Engagement  
**Wells Fargo:** Derek Lynch, Senior Vice President, Commercial Banking Leader

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**Cybersecurity Association of Maryland:** Shelley Lombardo, COO, Evergreen Advisors  
**Maryland Tech Council:** Todd Marks (Chair of MTC), President & CEO - Mindgrub  
**Regional Manufacturing Institute:** Michael Galiazzo, President  
**U.S. House of Representatives:** Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger – Director Emeritus



April 8, 2022

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB 897 - Economic Development - Sports Entertainment Facilities and Events,  
Prince George's County Blue Line Corridor Facilities, and Racing Facilities

Dear Senator Guy Guzzone and Senator Rosapepe,

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.

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 an 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.

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

April 8, 2022

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

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
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 Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation 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 85 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William P. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

April 5, 2022

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

The Honorable, Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
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

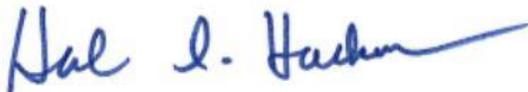
To Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

As a member of the member Orioles Designated Hitters Club (1979-present) and a member of Ravens Scouts (2019-present), 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)

April 5, 2022

Robert J. Cecil  
2500 Dulany Valley Road, K110  
Timonium, MD 21093  
[Bob.Cecil@hotmail.com](mailto:Bob.Cecil@hotmail.com)

The Honorable, Senator Gay Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable, Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
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 Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation 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 HB896 - Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards and its companion bill, HB897 - 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