

March 8, 2023

**Favorable with Amendments – SB 639**

Chairman Feldman and Members of the EEE Committee,

I am Tim Heely, Chair of The Historic St. Mary's City Commission (HSMCC) and I am here representing the Commissioners in support of SB 639, The Historic St. Mary's City Commission Reform Act of 2023.

Our Commission currently consists of 15 members who share a strong love for the history of our State and appreciation for the discoveries that are being uncovered regularly at the fort site. 12 of our Commissioners have been appointed within the last year in an effort to fill many vacancies and positions where terms had expired. Our commission is a diverse, energetic group that takes our responsibility to maintain and carry out the mission of Historic St. Mary's City very seriously.

Additionally, we have taken a strong interest in ensuring that the operations of HSMC are on par with other commissions and agencies of the State. It is our belief that the statute that governs the commission has not been significantly updated or reviewed since 1997. The provisions in this legislation would provide a path for the Commission to move forward with up to date guidance to best serve this organization.

With Maryland's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up in just 11 years, we recognize that our first State Capital will be of even more importance and we have taken it upon ourselves to ensure we have the site and its educational assets in the best possible condition for this celebration. We are working to further strengthen the bond between us and our immediate neighbor, St. Mary's College of Maryland as well as the local community and other organizations throughout the state and locations nearby.

It has been a banner couple of years for the City with the discovery and continued excavation of the original 1634 Fort, the arrival of the new Dove replica ship and the groundbreaking of a new Visitors' Center, none of which could have happened without your continued strong support. We appreciate Senator Bailey's assistance in having this legislation drafted to move us forward in the best manner possible. On behalf of The Historic St. Mary's Commissioners, staff and volunteers, I sincerely thank you for your time and request a favorable vote. I pledge that we will not let you down.