

HB 1038 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Bradley Poulin

Position: FAV



HB 1038 - Transportation - Highways - Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program - 3/2/2023 SUPPORT

On behalf of Grow & Fortify and our client associations (Brewers Association of Maryland, Maryland Distillers Guild and Maryland Wineries Association), we offer our strong support for HB 1038/SB 734.

This legislation would ensure that the Tourist Area Corridor Signage Program remains adequately funded and creates a system of supplemental guide signs to direct tourists to eligible attractions. Many of Maryland's craft beverage alcohol producers meet the eligibility requirements laid forth and would directly benefit from increased tourist visibility along Maryland's roadways.

Maryland's craft beverage alcohol producers are integral to Maryland tourism and to the state's economy, providing nearly \$1.3 billion in economic impact and supporting more than 8,500 full-time jobs. This signage program would ensure that these local small businesses and industries are made more visible to tourists and state residents seeking recreational, cultural and leisure opportunities throughout the state.

This legislation would directly impact small businesses in every corner of Maryland. Breweries, wineries and distilleries are often located on properties located on smaller or rural routes. The signage program covered in this bill would provide a clear guide and demarcation for travelers and help increase state tax revenues at these locations through increased consumer and tourist spending.

This legislation would provide additional support to these industries and simultaneously address current concerns:

- Small businesses in this industry that meet the current criteria continue to receive application denials citing a lack of funding;
- A lack of signage for these industries delivers the false impression that local breweries, distilleries and wineries are not valuable to tourism in Maryland;
- Tourists and visitors to surrounding states in our region see signage promoting local craft beverage alcohol producers when traveling.

This legislation will directly benefit local small businesses by increasing consumer awareness about these manufacturers and would assist tourists seeking recreational and leisure activities while traveling throughout Maryland.

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HB 1038 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Damon Callis

Position: FAV



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HB 1038 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: George Lin

Position: FAV



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HB1038_Solomon_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Jared Solomon

Position: FAV

JARED SOLOMON
Legislative District 18
Montgomery County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Vice Chair, Education
and Economic Development

House Chair
Joint Audit and Evaluation
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1038 Testimony –TAC Signage Act
March 2nd, 2023
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Maryland currently runs a Tourist Area and Corridor (TAC) Signing Program through the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) in partnership with the Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce). Attraction signs are necessary to direct visitors to cultural and recreational activities. TAC Signing is a system of supplemental guide signs which directs drivers to eligible individual attractions by first directing them to groups of attractions. These attractions are grouped into geographical areas and sub-areas. Mainline signs on expressways or major highways direct drivers to the geographical area. Then ramp and conventional road area signs lead drivers to the corridor from which all individual attractions are located. Each individual attraction has a trailblazing sign at the turn for each location.

To be eligible for TAC signing, attractions must meet a set of requirements, and is subject to space availability, as determined by SHA regulations and requirements. An eligible attraction must primarily provide recreational, historical, cultural, or leisure activities to the public and meet or adhere to a long list of criteria. HB 1038 would codify TAC, as it is currently operating without funding or statutory authority. The bill would keep most of the program the same with some additions. It allows for additional attractions deemed important to the state or local economy to be eligible even if they do not meet all the existing requirements. Any attraction granted an exception will be publicly posted on the TAC website.

It also adds breweries and distilleries to the eligible attractions for signing with a generic symbol. This is consistent with how wineries are already treated in the TAC program. The generic symbol and criteria for brewery and distillery eligibility will be determined by SHA and Commerce in consultation with a geographically diverse set of community stakeholders, including state leaders in the brewing and distilling industry, local elected officials, local economic development officials, and leaders in the tourism industry.

This inclusion of signs with a generic symbol will take the direct route of communication, meaning the viewer of the sign will directly “read off” the intended meaning based on the familiar generic symbol. This will encourage more travelers to stop and patronize the business when they recognize the proposed generic symbol for breweries and distilleries. Signs are crucial for businesses to attract new customers and grow their business overall. I consider these signs a crucial piece of the “last mile” marketing the state provides to support our businesses.

The final costs of the fabrication and installation of signs will be shared one to one between the attraction and the TAC program. The bill will require an initial appropriation of \$350,000 to fund and maintain TAC.

I look forward to working with representatives of MDOT and the TAC to continue to develop a coherent, effective, and equitable process to build and expand our local businesses across Maryland by making them more accessible to the traveling public. As you can see from the testimony submitted and the witnesses with us today, this bill is supported by Grow & Fortify, Tourism Agencies, businesses, and Chambers of Commerce across Maryland.

I ask for a favorable report on HB 1038.

HB 1038 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Monica Pearce

Position: FAV



HB 1038 - Transportation - Highways - Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program - 3/2/2023 SUPPORT

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This legislation would directly impact small businesses in every corner of Maryland. Breweries, wineries and distilleries are often located on properties located on smaller or rural routes. The signage program covered in this bill would provide a clear guide and demarcation for travelers and help increase state tax revenues at these locations through increased consumer and tourist spending.

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Thank you for your consideration and we urge you to vote in favor of this bill.



HB1038-RMC Support w Amends - Transportation-Highw

Uploaded by: Charlotte Davis

Position: FWA



Susan O'Neill, Chair

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Testimony in Support with Amendment of
House Bill 1038 – Transportation – Highways – Tourist Areas and Corridor Signage Program
Environment and Transportation Committee
March 2, 2023

The Rural Maryland Council supports with amendments House Bill 1038 - Transportation - Highways - Tourist Areas and Corridor Signage Program. This bill establishes the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program to create a system of supplemental guide signs to direct motorists to eligible individual attractions by directing the motorists first to groups of attractions; requires the Administration to conduct a certain investigation on signing feasibility and prepare a signing plan if the Eligibility Committee approves an attraction's application; requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$350,000 to the Program for fiscal year and generally relating to the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) welcomes the opportunity to highlight tourist areas and corridors throughout the State. Agritourism is one of the fastest growing segments of agricultural direct marketing taking place in rural areas across the State. Agritourism allows farmers to diversify their core operations and keep farmland in production while preserving scenic vistas and maintaining farming traditions. Agritourism helps educate the public about the importance of agriculture to a community's economic base, quality of life, history, and culture.

RMC would like this bill amended to include agritourism on the list found on page 4, Section (F)(2), lines 17 through 24 that includes the categories for attraction that are eligible for signing with generic symbols approved for use. Additionally, the Council would like the amendment to remove the timing restrictions as listed on page 3, Section (V), lines 12 through 17. The timing requirements could greatly limit the number of rural sites that would be eligible to participate in this program.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of House Bill 1038 with amendments.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

House Bill 1038
Amendments

1. On Page 3, Line 16, Strike “AND”.
2. On Page 3, Line 17 after “YEAR”, add “AND” and on line 18 add “5. Except for certain Seasonal Agritourism attractions.”
3. On Page 4, Line 23, add “AND” and on Line 24 add “Agritourism Attractions”.

HB1038 Fav with Amendments PresMD.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Redding

Position: FWA



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

February 28, 2023

Hon. Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, 6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: HB1038 FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Chairperson Barve,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1038** – a piece of legislation that has the opportunity to support and invest in our state’s history and communities.

Preservation Maryland is the statewide voice for historic preservation that works to protect the best of Maryland. Since 1931, we have worked tirelessly to protect the places, stories, and communities in Maryland that matter. (Learn more at: presmd.org)

Preservation Maryland is supportive of the bill which has the potential to positively impact historic communities and heritage tourism community within the state. We believe that an annual appropriation of \$350,000 is not enough for tourism signage across the state. We respectfully suggest a simple amendment to increase the annual appropriations to \$1,000,000 annually, derived from the transportation trust fund. This addition would provide the heritage tourism community with the stable source of funds for signage development that is critical to guide travelers across difficult terrain, landscapes, and mark the sites of underrepresented history.

HB1038 is an innovative way of providing critical and stable funding for signage development for Maryland’s heritage tourism community. Therefore, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB1038 with our suggested amendment.

Favorable with Amendments

Sincerely,

Nicholas A. Redding, President & CEO

HB1038 Support Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Ruth Toomey

Position: FWA



March 2, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: HB1038

Position: ***Support with Amendments***

Chair Barve and Sub-Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) and our members, I am writing to express our **support with amendments** for the funding for the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program (TAC). The TAC sign program while considered a way finding program by the State Highway Administration, it also acts as a marketing tool for the businesses who are approved through the program's application process. The Maryland Tourism Coalition, along with the Maryland Office of Tourism and the State Highway Administration are the ones who are responsible for approving the applications. Currently, three counties have not completed construction (Anne Arundel, Howard and Baltimore) and 3 counties are placed on hold with back logged applications because the program ran out of funding (Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester). I ask that before we use the proposed funding for new signs, we finish the construction of the signs and clear the back log.

Tourism is a very important part of Maryland's economy. In fact, it is the 12th largest private sector employer, creating 173,700 jobs. Tourism generates \$2.1 billion in state and local taxes saving Maryland households nearly \$1,000 annually in state taxes. For every \$1 spent on marketing tourism by the Maryland Office of Tourism, \$31 comes back to the Maryland economy. The TAC sign program helps both domestic and especially international visitors to their destination from the highways.

While the role of the State Highway Administration is to get drivers through the state swiftly & safely, the TAC signs are an important tool to navigating the state, especially in rural areas where cell phone reception may be spotty. And again, the signage helps keep people off their phones while driving. The signs, while not created to be a marketing tool, are just that. When you are driving down 70 and you see a sign for one of these attractions, you may not stop then, but you may on your way back or plan a trip for another time.

The sign program was created over 10 + years ago leaving those who are eligible for signage to a very short list as breweries, distilleries and agritourism and others were not as popular as they are today. Other important sectors are not eligible for this program, live entertainment venues such as the Lyric or Hippodrome, do not qualify. We also look to change the requirements of the days and hours of operations that the business must be open due to the fact that coming out of the pandemic and the loss of the workforce has forced businesses to change their operating models in order to survive.

When we invest in tourism, we all win. We urge you to approve this bill with amendments to fund the TAC Signage Program. Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Toomey

**Ruth Toomey, Executive Director
Maryland Tourism Coalition**

TAC and TASP Overview and Status_DMOs_09012021.pdf

Uploaded by: Ruth Toomey

Position: FWA

Tourist Areas and Corridors (TAC) and Tourist Attractions Sign Programs (TASP)

The Tourist Areas and Corridors (TAC) Signing Program is a system of supplemental guide signs which direct motorists to eligible individual attractions by first directing motorist to groups of attractions. Attractions are grouped into geographical areas and sub-areas. Each area or sub-area has a defined roadway corridor to provide access to the attractions. Signing starts with mainline signs on freeways, expressways or major conventional highways which name the geographical areas. Then ramp signs and conventional road area signs guide motorists to the corridor in an area or sub-area. Along the area or sub-area corridor, individual attraction trailblazing signs guide motorists to individual attractions. In historic towns and urban areas, the applicable parking area or facility that serves multiple attractions is signed in lieu of individual attractions. A schematic overview is presented in **Figure 1**.

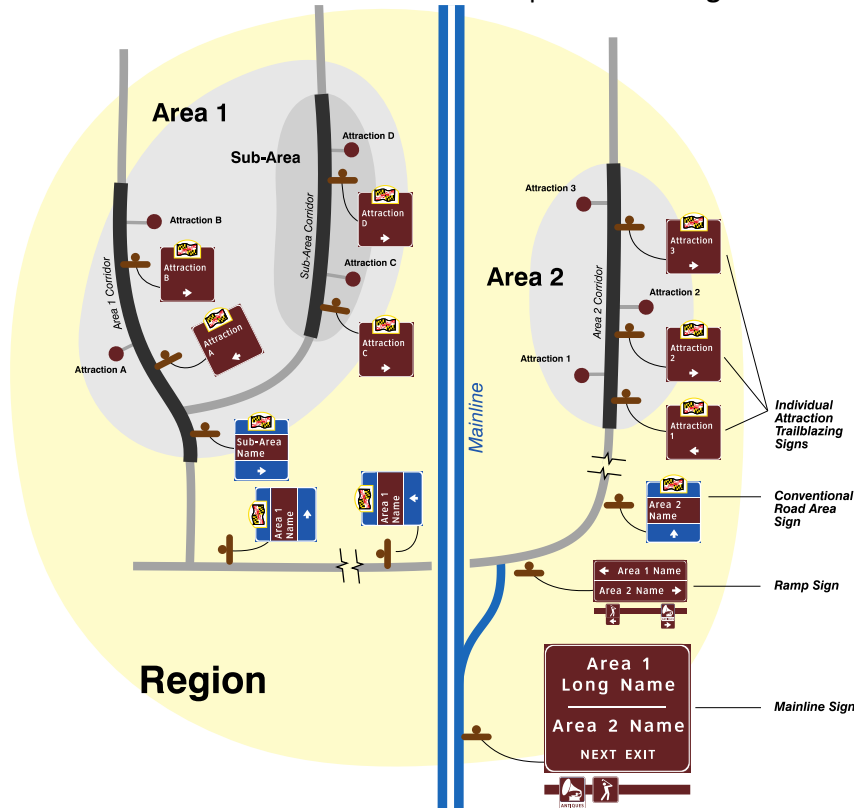


Figure 1. TAC Signing Program Schematic Overview

The Maryland Tourist Attractions Sign Program (TASP) and TAC Signing Programs have been a collaboration between the Maryland Department of Commerce Office of Tourism Development (OTD), the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC), and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTS). The TAC Signing Program was originally conceived to replace or absorb other existing sign programs in Maryland to avoid signing overload, address increased demand for tourism related signing, and accommodate a larger population of attractions. Examples of previous or other programs include Local Wayfinding (Vehicular), Maryland History Sign Program, Recreational or Cultural Interest Areas, Specific Service (LOGO) Signs, TASP, Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS), and Winery Signing. Additional benefits and reasons for the creation of the TAC Signing Program include:

- The TASP, a subset of LOGO, is limited to freeways and expressways per current and past federal and state regulations. This limited the program to counties with expressways and freeways, which in turn limited program opportunities in rural areas of the state with otherwise eligible attractions.
- Additionally, the logos for Attractions are not always as recognizable when compared to logos for specific services such as gas, food, and lodging.
- The TASP program was limited to 6 attractions per interchange.

- TODS are limited to rural conventional roads meaning two systems of signs would be implemented in the state. Tourists would need to look for TASP along expressways and freeways and TODS on rural conventional roads. In some cases the two systems may overlap.
- TAC provides guidance to more attractions and is more legible than other programs.
- TAC provides guidance to attractions that were not eligible for previous programs.
- TAC incorporates older signing programs into a cohesive, statewide system of signs that are more recognizable to tourists.

The TAC Signing Program Guidelines and Application were developed with eligibility criteria based on federal and state regulations, guidelines, and the previous TASP. The TAC Guidelines and eligibility criteria are used by the TAC Eligibility Committee (EC) to fairly determine which attractions meet the minimum criteria. The EC includes representatives of MDOT SHA (Office of Environmental Design and OOTS), Department of Commerce OTD, Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, associated County Destination Marketing Officer and the MTC. Generally, eligible attractions must primarily provide recreational, historical, cultural, or leisure activities to the public and meet or adhere to the following:

In order to qualify for TAC signing a facility must meet specific criteria which may be found here.

www.roads.maryland.gov/tac

The state is implementing TAC county by county. To date 17 counties have received their initial TAC implementation and 6 counties await their initial TAC signing implementation. **Table 1** includes more detailed information on the implementation and program status for each county. At this time the program remains on hold pending available resources and applications are still being accepted and deferred until program efforts resume.

Table 1. TAC Implementation Status

County	TAC Status
Charles	Construction Completed
Cecil	Construction Completed
Harford	Construction Completed
Caroline	Construction Completed
Dorchester	Construction Completed
Calvert	Construction Completed
Talbot	Construction Completed
Allegany	Construction Completed
Kent	Construction Completed
Frederick	Construction Completed
Carroll	Construction Completed
Queen Anne's	Construction Completed
Saint Mary's	Construction Completed
Montgomery	Construction Completed
Garrett	Construction Completed
Prince George's	Construction Completed
Washington	Construction Completed
Somerset	Design on Hold
Wicomico	Planning on Hold
Worcester	Planning on Hold
Howard	On Hold
Baltimore	On Hold
Anne Arundel	On Hold

It is noted for those counties not yet receiving their initial TAC implementation, TASP applications are still being accepted. It is noted TASP is only applicable to freeways and expressways. More information may be found here: <https://www.roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=138>

HB1038 - SHA - TAC - LOI_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

March 2, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chairman, Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1038 – Transportation – Highways – Tourist Area
Corridor Signage Program***

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1038 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 1038 requires the Governor to include an appropriation of \$350,000 in the fiscal year 2025 budget for the Tourist Area Corridor Signage Program (TAC). The bill also requires the MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and Maryland Department of Commerce to establish an Eligibility Committee to develop standards and procedures for determining eligibility for the program. House Bill 1038 also seeks to codify various eligibility requirements and criteria in determining participation in the program. Finally, House Bill 1038 would give the Maryland Department of Commerce review and approval authority of signage plans on the SHA right-of-way.

The SHA launched the TAC program to inform motorists of eligible recreational, cultural or historical tourism sites. The eligibility criteria for the program were based on federal regulations and guidelines, as well as successful TAC programs of other states. The TAC Eligibility Committee has representation from several agencies and organizations, including SHA and Maryland Department of Commerce, and it uses the existing eligibility criteria to determine which business and attractions will participate in the program. Businesses and attractions apply for the program on a county-by-county basis, which allows for local involvement and feedback from various stakeholders within each county.

The TAC program has a history of regulatory challenges with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as they scrutinize its compliance with federal regulations. The TAC program is regulated by federal laws and regulations that govern highway signs, including the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and it must remain compliant or risk the loss of federal funding. Federal funds are critical to SHA's capital program and any reductions would significantly impact SHA's ability to deliver projects.

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Page Two

Due to the lack of federal support, the program is solely supported by State funds. Prior to funding challenges, 17 counties received their initial implementation of TAC signage; the total cost for the initial round of TAC signs for the 17 counties was roughly \$7.85 million. To complete the remaining 6 counties, SHA estimates a cost of \$7 million, taking into account the increased cost of material, products, and labor since the initial implementation of the first 17 counties. This estimate includes expenses related to planning, design, and construction of the TAC signs for the remaining 6 counties. In addition to the actual cost of the fabrication of a sign, which is dependent on the design, SHA accounts for construction costs such as lane/shoulder closure for installation as well as mobilization/demobilization efforts for the projects. Additionally, if a TAC sign will be placed outside of SHA right-of-way, there are costs associated with right-of-entry/memorandum of understanding coordination with property owners and/or local jurisdictions.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1038.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Baldwin
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Policy and Legislative Services
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-310-1056

Pilar Helm
Director
Office of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090