

*Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, 3W  
Annapolis, MD 21401*

**RE: SB783-SUPPORT**

John Krumpotich, Owner of Historic Fort Ritchie  
Support for the Historic Properties Disposition and Preservation Team and Extension of the  
Income Tax Credit for Catalytic Revitalization Projects

Historic Fort Ritchie is emblematic of Senate Bill 738 in a multitude of ways. When closed in 1998 by the United States Army, the Local Authority responsible for managing and maintaining the property failed to do so in a way beneficial to the community and region, which ultimately created a situation in which buildings that fell under the Maryland Historic Trust overlay became blighted, vandalized, and abandoned. Serious management of the disposition process would have prevented decay of these historic structures immensely. At its height, Fort Ritchie was a strong economic driver for the region, producing over 2,500 federal jobs on site and thousands more in the form of subcontractors, maintenance, and office workers connected with its operations. All of those jobs, along with the tax base created by those workers vanished from the community overnight. It has taken significant efforts from our team and support from local and state funding sources to begin to adequately revitalize the property. The promise of substantial tax incentive for historical properties throughout the state is the key to creating opportunities in communities to regain economic drivers lost through the exit of state and federally run institutions.

Fort Ritchie's 2022 award of the \$15,000,000 revitalization tax credit is a massive incentive for our team to keep pushing forward in bringing this property back to life. At the completion of our property revival, Fort Ritchie will be a tale of two cities; in the front of the property, a thriving historical tourism and recreational destination, ripe with community events, concerts, farmers markets, annual celebrations, unique storefronts occupying the historic fieldstone buildings, medical presence, and a blooming neighborhood providing to the local economy, workforce, and an increased number of students occupying the local elementary school. The rear of the property will feature light manufacturing spaces that will provide a number of jobs and enhance the tax base of the 21719 Zip Code and Washington County. All of this in service of our community which did incredibly well during the decade's long occupation of the United States Army and severely felt the impact of its departure. Fort Ritchie will be a place of immense economic and community achievement for Western Maryland and be a place for all to benefit.

This will be true of any property that falls under the designation of the Catalytic Revitalization Tax Credit. Senator Hester's proposal of expanding the sunset on these programs is vitally important as well. Large properties, like Ritchie's 500+ acre campus, require years of work and investment to create utility for these sites once again, and in cases where the property has significantly deteriorated, even more so. It is with strong enthusiasm that we support this bill and rally behind the benefits of the tax credit which will surely bolster other communities in similar situations as we have encountered at Fort Ritchie, Maryland.