

Testimony in Support of HB0897

Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force

March 4, 2024 – House Appropriations Committee

As a proud resident and native of Baltimore, I am deeply invested in the success and prosperity of our city and the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC), I wholeheartedly support SB 896 and echo the sentiments expressed by the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association (MHLA). The establishment of a Task Force to study and recommend enhancements for the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) is not just timely but imperative for the revitalization of our city's convention and tourism industry.

The BCC is a cornerstone of Baltimore's economic and social landscape, drawing thousands of visitors each year and serving as a catalyst for local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues. The downturn in convention business post-COVID, as highlighted by MHLA, underscores the urgent need for strategic redevelopment and operational improvements to regain our competitive edge against cities with newer and more accommodating facilities.

Investing in the BCC is an investment in Baltimore's future. A revitalized convention center will attract a larger number and variety of events, generating significant economic activity and tax revenue for the city and state. It will also create numerous job opportunities, directly and indirectly, reinforcing the hospitality and tourism sector as a key pillar of our local economy.

I stand with MHLA in requesting a Favorable Report on SB 896. By collaborating on this initiative, we can ensure the Baltimore Convention Center becomes a beacon of innovation, inclusivity, and industry leadership, propelling our city to new heights in the national and international convention markets.

Respectfully,

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General Manager

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