

VISIT BALTIMORE™

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BALTIMORE.ORG

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Chair Stephanie M. Smith, Esq.
Lowe House Office Building, Room 314

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Visit Baltimore is writing to support House Bill 0897 to create the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force, with the purpose being to study and make recommendations concerning the membership, purpose, and function of an authority to govern the renovation, revitalization, financing, and ongoing maintenance and management of the Baltimore Convention site and certain surrounding areas.

Over the last few years, we've seen progress in the revitalization of Baltimore. For those of us who live and work here, it's easy to see that Baltimore has all the makings of a world-class destination for meetings and conventions. And with the recent investments in development and transportation, we have more to offer visitors than ever before.

However, there is a glaring gap that stands between the present and the future we know to be possible - our outdated convention center. The last significant renovation was completed over 25 years ago, and as the years have passed our direct competitors have continued making major investments in their convention centers, leaving Baltimore in a precarious position to compete.

Failure to modernize the Convention Center is forfeiture of the economic prosperity that a reinvigorated tourist economy would create. From 2013 through 2022, we've lost the business of 426,000 possible attendees, equating to a loss of over 700,000 room nights and \$14 million in local tax revenue. The cost of inaction is not just loss of opportunity; it is a tangible loss of substantial economic benefit, year after year.

We consider this task force to be an essential element of a prosperous tourism economy. Not only is this an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the growth of this city, but it is an opportunity to put that responsibility in the hands of those who live and work in Baltimore. This is an opportunity to lead, to invest in our collective future, and to secure our place as a premier destination.

Sincerely,



Matt Hutchinson
Visit Baltimore
President and CEO