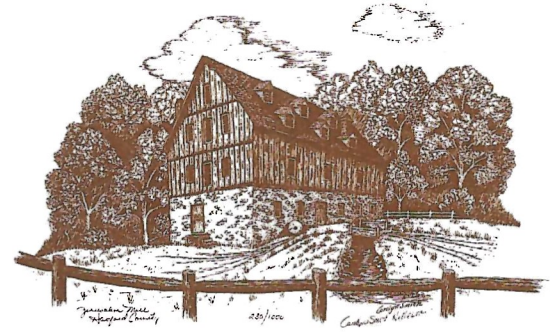


Written testimony for Maryland Historical Trust –  
Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program  
Funding (SB0616)

February 6, 2024

Maryland General Assembly  
Budget & Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401



To whom it may concern

Please accept this letter as written testimony in support of a \$5M appropriation in FY2025 for the Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program (MAP) at the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) as presented in Senate Bill 0616. I represent the Friends of Jerusalem Mill in Harford County, one of over 400 history museums, historical societies, and community archives in our state that serve countless Marylanders and steward irreplaceable connections to our diverse history. If recognized, this reactivation of MAP would build urgently needed capacity within Maryland’s network of underfunded yet vitally important history museums.

MAP served history museums by providing operating grants, technical assistance, and networking opportunities from 1991 until 2011 when funding stopped. Without this essential and steady support, history museums of all sizes struggle to maintain baseline operations. These struggles are particularly challenging for small, non-profit, charitable organizations such as ours, as we attempt to preserve an entire 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century mill village that is owned by the State. The impact of these programs not only provides educational and recreational opportunities for Marylanders, but also demonstrates that Maryland is a leader in preserving the nation’s rich history and sharing it with the general public. As an example, our guest register includes visitors from every state in the United States, and so far from 57 other countries. Without grants such as MAP, we can’t keep up with the demands of maintaining, restoring, and preserving Maryland’s history, and making it available for all to appreciate.

Current funding shortfalls have forced us and many other institutions to abandon some preservation efforts, reduce operations, and limit the free programs available to a broad audience. The reinstatement of MAP funding will help to increase access to knowledge about Maryland’s struggles for independence and freedom that serves as inspiration for future generations. Our network of history museums is a critical part of the necessary work to preserve our cultural infrastructure in Maryland, but we need the State of Maryland’s support to continue this effort.

Sincerely,

Richard Albright  
Vice President  
Friends of Jerusalem Mill