

February 6, 2024

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

Re: *Written testimony for Maryland Historical Trust – Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program- Funding (SB0616), Position **FAVORABLE***

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter as written testimony in support of an \$5M appropriation in FY 2025 for the Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program (MAP) at the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) as presented in Senate Bill 0616. I am writing as an individual, but as the former Coordinator of the Frederick Historic Sites Consortium, I was deeply involved with the former iteration of this program. For nearly every year from 1992-2011, I was a member of the peer review panel for the Maryland Museum Assistance Program. I saw firsthand the important difference the program made to Maryland's Museums. And, because I was an employee of the Tourism Council of Frederick County, I witnessed the difference that investment in museums made to the tourism economy where museums benefitted from the MAP program.

Maryland is home to 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 the funding stopped. In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly required a report by MHT regarding museum and preservation funding. The report's top recommendation was to reinstitute and fund MAP, which is still in statute at MHT despite receiving no funding for 12 years. Without this essential and steady support, history museums of all sizes struggle to maintain baseline operations.

As the nation looks forward to celebrating 250 years of history, it is essential to strengthen the museums and historic sites that preserve and share the full sweep of Maryland and US history. Yet, it is difficult for many Maryland to plan legacy projects and preserve Maryland's history when struggling with basic infrastructure needs. Instituting MAP now will make it possible for Maryland's museums to serve Marylanders with 250th projects from a position of greater stability.

Maryland's past, present and future deserves the State's investment in Maryland museums. Please support SB0616.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Scott Shatto
9796 Chestnut Oak Court
Frederick, MD 21701