



February 27, 2024

Maryland House of Delegates
Delegate Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
121 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of HB 56 - Worcester County - Motor Home and Recreational Trailer Shows - Out-of-State Dealers

Chairperson Korman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Libber, and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC). I am writing to you today to express MTC's support for House Bill 56. The Maryland Tourism Coalition is a trade organization with members representing all areas of tourism in the State of Maryland. Our mission is to support businesses and organizations that cater to the tourism industry through education, networking, and advocacy. As such, MTC asks the committee to vote in favor of this bill.

Worcester County host nearly 8 million guests per year. Travel and tourism are a critical driver of economic growth and employment in Worcester County. Over the past few years, we have seen a tremendous shift in travelers' choices, interests and values when it comes to making a vacation decision. Outdoor recreation, adventure and unique and authentic experiences have become a priority for couples, families and even business travel. We are truly blessed to have so many of these assets in our region and as a result, we have recovered quickly from the economic downturn that the pandemic caused. Tourism in our state has seen more than 90 % of pre- pandemic figures (tourism tax codes). In order to continue on this path to a healthy economy, including job growth, it is critical that we enthusiastically attract visitors and offer what they are seeking.

In that arena of outdoor recreation, RV and "Van Life" travel have become even more attractive and popular. According to the 2022 KOA Camping Report RV ownership has increased by 62% in the last 20 years. In 2021, camping accounted for 40% of all leisure trips, with more than half of the travelers including camping in some or all of their travels. With an array of camping experiences in Maryland, from the mountains to the beaches, we want to be able to cater to these travelers.



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Worcester County alone has over 20 + Campgrounds within a 60-mile radius. As a result, Ocean City is again planning to host an RV show in the expanded Convention Center. However, the success of the show may be diminished due to lack of participation from dealers outside of Maryland.

Currently, the law restricts any outside MD licensed dealer (anything that needs a title and tag from the MVA) from displaying in the state of Maryland. Unless the vendor owns and operates a business in the State of Maryland, they cannot display their product at the Convention Center, which limits the variety of what we can provide for those seeking these experiences. Many dealers are located in Delaware and Virginia, followed by Maryland's 8 RV dealers on the other side of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. The closest Maryland RV dealer to Ocean City is 106 miles away. In addition, there are also many popular RV brands not sold in Maryland, limiting the choices we can offer – like Airstream, located in VA and NJ.

For these reasons, the Maryland Tourism Coalition asks this committee to provide a favorable report of this legislation and forwarded it a full vote within the House of Delegates.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Libber
Legislative Chair
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