



February 23, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman Chair  
House Environment & Transportation Committee

Re: HB-840

Position: Support

Chair Marc Korman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) and our members, I am writing to express our **SUPPORT** for Vehicle Laws – Annual Vehicle Shows – Motor and Trailer Homes, HB840. The Maryland Tourism Coalition is a 5016C, representing all sectors of the Tourism industry across the state including the Maryland Association of Campgrounds, the Town of Ocean City, Worcester County Tourism and many other small businesses that would benefit from the passing of this bill that lie within the town of Ocean City.

Allowing MD dealers to participate in more than 2 annual RV shows will bring more dealers, customers, and visitors to the OCRV Show. Doing this will generate additional revenue for the OC Convention Center and the State of MD, increase tourism to Ocean City, and generate more business for restaurants, room rentals, and more. Enhancing the OCRV show will be beneficial to tourism and economic development in Ocean City and throughout Maryland. Outdoor recreation in the state of Maryland generates \$8.3 billion. RVing is listed in the top five (5) industries 2<sup>nd</sup> to boating/fishing and followed by hunting/shooting/trapping, motorcycling/ATVing and equestrian.

RVs cater to the recreational consumer with disposable income and are often considered luxury purchases. As a point of comparison, boats also cater to the recreational consumer with disposable income and are often considered luxury purchases. In Maryland, boat dealers already have the opportunity to display in multiple shows around the state. Boats are licensed by DNR and RVs are licensed by MVA, but the intent of the consumer purchasing either product is the same. Currently Maryland only holds 3 show RV shows. Two in Timonium, one in the Spring and one in the Fall. And the OCRV show that occurs in the Fall. A time when the visitor numbers and hotel rooms are down in Ocean City.

The closest in-state dealer is 74 miles away from Ocean City and therefore, many out-of-state dealers from Delaware and Virginia are physically closer and more accessible. There are also makes and models of RV's that are not represented by Maryland dealers including Air Stream, Scamp, Oliver, and the Aluminum Trailer Company, to name a few.

These changes are intended to capitalize on Ocean City's reputation as a tourist destination in order to increase sale opportunities for the nine RV dealerships in Maryland, eight of which are on the other side of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and much farther away from the Eastern Shore market than many out-of-state dealers.

Tourism is a very important part of Maryland's economy. In fact, it is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest private sector employer, creating 187,296. Tourism generates \$2.3 billion in state and local taxes saving Maryland households nearly \$1,000 annually in state taxes. For every \$1 spent on marketing tourism by the Maryland Office of Tourism, \$31 comes back to the Maryland economy. According to RVPark.com, Maryland is home to 89 RV Parks. These parks attract visitors that are both Maryland residents and out of state residents, who are spending money and making an economic impact, statewide.

When we invest in tourism, we all win. We urge you to approve this bill. Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Ruth Toomey*

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Maryland Tourism Coalition

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