

Support for HB 1032.pdf

Uploaded by: Amanda Haddaway

Position: FAV

Support for HB 1032: Enhancing Maryland's Craft Beverage Tourism Through Road Signage

I am writing to you in my capacity as a board member of Tenth Ward Distilling Company, and on behalf of the broader community of Maryland's alcohol manufacturers, to express our enthusiastic support for HB 1032. This bill proposes the establishment of a program for tourist area signage specifically designed for breweries, distilleries, and wineries. Such a program would enable our businesses to apply for and finance road signs advertising our locations as tourist attractions, a much-needed initiative that would significantly benefit the craft beverage industry in Maryland.

The absence of a dedicated program for distillery road signage in Maryland places us at a disadvantage compared to our counterparts in surrounding states, where such initiatives have proven successful in directing tourists and locals alike to tap rooms and tasting rooms. The ability to promote our brands through road signage is a vital tool for increasing visibility, attracting visitors, and enhancing the overall success of our business.

For Tenth Ward Distilling Company, the opportunity to participate in a tourist area signage program would be transformative. Despite the quality and appeal of our products, reaching potential visitors is a constant challenge, particularly given the rural or off-the-beaten-path locations of many craft beverage producers. Road signs would provide an invaluable means of directing traffic to our distillery, thereby increasing foot traffic, sales, and brand recognition.

The broader impact of such a program on Maryland's economy cannot be overstated. The Maryland alcohol manufacturing sector, representing over 275 breweries, distilleries, and wineries, plays a significant role in the state's economy, with an annual economic impact of \$3.4 billion. This sector generates \$52 million per year in tax revenue and supports over 33,500 jobs across manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industries. By enhancing the visibility of these businesses, HB 1032 would not only support the growth of individual producers but also contribute to the state's economic vitality and job creation.

Moreover, implementing a tourist area signage program aligns with broader efforts to promote Maryland as a premier destination for craft beverage tourism. Such initiatives are essential for maintaining competitiveness and ensuring that Maryland keeps pace with neighboring states that have recognized the value of supporting their craft beverage industries through similar measures.

I strongly urge your support for HB 1032. By voting in favor of this bill, you will be supporting not just the craft beverage industry but also the broader economic and tourism interests of Maryland. We are prepared to work closely with the state to implement this program effectively and ensure that it serves as a model for how to promote and support the craft beverage industry.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this important issue.

Amanda Haddaway

Amanda Haddaway, MA, MJ, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

Managing Director, [HR Answerbox](#)

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HB 1032_URBAN_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Damon Callis

Position: FAV



The Urban Winery of Silver Spring
2315 Stewart Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairperson, Korman and Members of the Committee:

This morning on their way to school I told my family, my wife Georgia, daughter Sophia, my son Stephen and Stella my youngest that I was going to Annapolis to ask for a sign to help people find our business. Together we have been through a tough situation over these weeks, months, and years. What a journey our family has been over the last 3 years. From chaos, closure, moving our business location, rebuilding, uncertainty, struggle, strife. We have been through a lot to say the least, as have many. If the TAC Signage program was funded and functioning when we first applied back in September 2016, and every year since. In fact, our business was skipped back in 2019. We know this because a fellow winery in Olney received their TAC signage back in Oct of 2019. Why were we skipped at that time? No explanation provided. Would it have been any better if we had had the TAC signage program? We all would say, Yes Absolutely! Will it make an impact today and tomorrow? Yes. Absolutely for our future. The future of our family, future our business, future of our commitment in supporting our small business community. Yes. Yes. Yes.

This is the second year I sit before you to see where the progress of this issue has led us. Where are we in this much needed and growing need for this economic development initiative? Last year the report of an overwhelming back log and extremely under budgeted issues plagued this SHA program. Has that been addressed? Undoubtedly, the uncertainty and the reasons of the programs past failures is now becoming a sense of urgency building among our growing industry that has now shifted to eagerness and active involvement. That has led us here today. I am here to share with you and to highlight the positive impact of these appropriations to this SHA run TAC wayfaring signage program. I am happy and encouraged by the fact that Del. SOLOMON and Sen. Zucker and their team took the time to respond, asked questions and brought forth the opportunity for me to readdress you today.

I am here today to ask that we work to place the eligible small business tourism attraction signs and the Urban Winery of Silver Spring off exit 31 Georgia Ave on the map so all who come through our region are aware of the tourism attraction in Silver Spring to see what we have to offer. We must invest, to grow and survive. History has shown that it is through the small family business industry that communities thrive and grow. The sense of belonging and wanting to raise families here and encourage others to share what we have, our values, our

kindness and the richness of our agriculture. VA and others have done it. We have small businesses doing it, but tourists and locals alike often have no idea where we are. Trust me on a weekly basis I set up often at Farmers Markets and folks are shocked how long our business has been in Maryland in such a vibrant area and have never seen a sign? How do we change that? How do you help us put Urban Winery and other eligible businesses on the map? I may have boundless energy, but help us do this and trust me it will help grow the Ag-Tourism industry and the sense of other small businesses are thriving in Maryland after such a difficult period of time.

The impact is felt all the way down the grape vine. The value add it provides to our local communities, with jobs, our districts, and national recognition of our Great State of Maryland. The proof is 113,000 jobs. The \$2.1 Billion in state and local revenue. Imagine if we had a TAC sign for all the eligible tourism attractions over the last number of years. Can we guess if the revenues would go up? Yes of course. We contribute positively to the healthy growing and diverse economy of Maryland Agriculture that has been created over the last 10 years. Called the Craft Beverage industry.

The last sign to be placed by SHA was years ago and the backlog of eligible businesses is not growing at an alarming rate as previously stated. During my yearlong research into this topic, the TAC signage growth is moderate. Answer me this, how many marinas, campgrounds or golf courses are submitted? The answer is limited but the program also provides for Wineries and we are growing. In fact it is Governor Moore top initiative to support Maryland Agriculture, an industry we are intimately tied to. Currently, there are no more than 24 other wineries who would benefit greatly from this program, just like the previous program provided when the SHA was funded, these wineries are thriving. Those wineries, campgrounds, marinas are all still thriving to this day. Why is that so difficult to place a few signs that are already approved and are eligible? The tax revenue for the 275 wineries, breweries, distilleries and the other small business recipients is paid back in dividends. I am just 1 of these eligible businesses for the TAC program. However, today I am representing the MWA as a board member. We have 20+ members who will benefit from this unique Ag-tourism signage program. It will assist the growing population of Marylanders but also reach the non-Marylanders traveling in and out of our Nation's Capital, and those who live, work, entertain and commute to Maryland.

In closing the impact of the TAC signage program will indeed have a huge positive impact. For my business, for Pam, Julie and many others business it will make a significant economic difference. Increase revenues, increase in tax revenue, increase in job creation, increase in awareness of a growing agricultural industry, increase national recognition of quality and service hospitality that our great state of Maryland is open for business and growing and thriving. Growing in many areas and the craft beverage, hospitality service industry was hit particularly hard will lead the way. So please join me, fund this TAC program and most importantly DRINK MARYLAND WINE. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Damon Callis
Vintner and CEO
The Urban Winery of Silver Spring

Visit Frederick HB 1032 Letter of Support 2.21.24.

Uploaded by: Dave Ziedelis

Position: FAV



February 21, 2024

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 1032 – Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the House Environment and
Transportation Committee:

On behalf of Visit Frederick (the Tourism Council of Frederick County), the designated
and official destination marketing organization for Frederick County, MD, please accept
this letter of support for HB 1032 – Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage
Program.

HB 1032 establishes a program for tourist area signage that would allow breweries,
distilleries, and wineries to apply for and pay for road signs advertising as tourist
attractions. The opportunity to direct people to our tap/tasting rooms is a matrix that
our surrounding states have excelled with and that Maryland has unfortunately falling
far behind. There is currently no program in place that would allow for a brewery or
distillery to be mentioned in road signage – and being able to promote their brands will
only make for more successful businesses and additional tax revenues.

Maryland craft beverage entities represent over 275 breweries, distilleries, and wineries
and have an annual economic impact of \$3.4 billion and generate \$52 million per year in
tax revenue while supporting over 33,500 jobs in the manufacturing, agriculture,
tourism and hospitality industries.

We encourage everyone on the Senate Finance Committee to support HB 1032. Thank
you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Ziedelis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dave Ziedelis
Executive Director

HB 2024 testimony signage.pdf

Uploaded by: Jaime Windon

Position: FAV



February 21, 2024

Good afternoon Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the committee:

My name is Jaime Windon and I own the LYON RUM distillery in Saint Michaels, and I serve as chair of the Maryland Distillers Guild Government Affairs Committee, and I am in support of HB 1032.

I truly appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill, and I want to thank you all for your attention to, and support for, Maryland Alcohol Manufacturers.

My distillery is located in a very small town on the Eastern Shore. With under 1000 residents, we rely on tourism throughout the year to support all of the small businesses, particularly my distillery, which is open daily, year round, even though Saint Michaels is very much a seasonal location. We can all agree that good, clear signage is critical for all drivers, but it is especially so for tourists that are unfamiliar with the area and looking for attractions that might interest them. We have the unique situation of our main street (Talbot Street) being a state highway (Route 33) which means we are extremely limited in regards to the signage that we are able to display. Furthermore, our historic town has exceedingly strict regulations on signage, in both size and quantity. The distillery is located off the main street behind the local winery, which has had a large attractive, state highway sign for as long as I can remember -- at least the 11 years that I've been in business. However, neither the distillery nor the brewery have any proper highway signage -- not in town next to the winery sign, nor on any of the connecting bypass highway miles leading to town, which boast a number of attractions. I simply can't emphasize enough how critical signage is in a tourist corridor, and how much this would make a difference in supporting our distillery and our fellow alcohol manufacturers. Speaking both as someone who owns a distillery, but also travels with the intention of visiting other distilleries, breweries and wineries, signage like this has often aided me in finding a hidden gem when I would have otherwise missed out.

Help put us on the map -- literally!

Thank you for your consideration, and for your support of HB 1032.

Sincerely,

Jaime Windon
LYON RUM // Windon Distilling Company
605 S. Talbot Street #6
Saint Michaels, Maryland 21663
hello@lyonrum.com

HB1032_Solomon_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Jared Solomon

Position: FAV

JARED SOLOMON
Legislative District 18
Montgomery County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Vice Chair, Education
and Economic Development

House Chair
Joint Audit and Evaluation
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1032 Testimony –TAC Signage Act
February 23, 2024
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on my bill HB1032 that reinvigorates the Maryland Tourist Area and Corridor (TAC) Signing Program operated by the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) in partnership with the Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce). Attraction signs are necessary to direct visitors to cultural and recreational activities. TAC Signing is a system of supplemental guide signs which directs drivers to eligible individual attractions by first directing them to groups of attractions. These attractions are grouped into geographical areas and sub-areas. Mainline signs on expressways or major highways direct drivers to the geographical area. Then ramp and conventional road area signs lead drivers to the corridor from which all individual attractions are located. Each individual attraction has a trailblazing sign at the turn for each location.

To be eligible for TAC signing, attractions must meet a set of requirements, and is subject to space availability, as determined by SHA regulations and requirements. An eligible attraction must primarily provide recreational, historical, cultural, or leisure activities to the public and meet or adhere to a long list of criteria. HB 1038 would codify TAC, as it is currently operating without funding or statutory authority. The bill would keep most of the program the same with some additions. It allows for additional attractions deemed important to the state or local economy to be eligible even if they do not meet all the existing requirements. Any attraction granted an exception will be publicly posted on the TAC website.

It also adds breweries and distilleries to the eligible attractions for signing with a generic symbol. This is consistent with how wineries are already treated in the TAC program. The generic symbol and criteria for brewery and distillery eligibility will be determined by SHA and Commerce in consultation with a geographically diverse set of community stakeholders, including state leaders in the brewing and distilling industry, local elected officials, local economic development officials, and leaders in the tourism industry.

The inclusion of generic symbols on signs will allow viewers to directly “read off” the intended meaning based on the familiar symbol. This will encourage more travelers to stop and patronize the business when they recognize the proposed symbol for breweries and distilleries. Signs are crucial

for businesses to attract new customers and grow their business overall. I consider these signs a crucial piece of the “last mile” marketing the state provides to support our businesses.

Lastly, under this bill each applicant who is approved for a sign under the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program will pay the entire cost of manufacturing and installation of the sign as well as an annual administrative fee once the sign is installed.

I am continuing to work with representatives of MDOT SHA on amendments to the bill, ensuring we develop a coherent, effective, and equitable process to revitalize and expand the TAC program. As you can see from the testimony submitted and the witnesses with us today, this bill is supported by Cultivate & Craft, Tourism Agencies, businesses, and Chambers of Commerce across Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration and I ask for a favorable report on HB 1032.

HB1032.pdf

Uploaded by: Kelly Dudeck

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of HB 1032:

Transportation - Highways - Tourist Area and Corridor Signage

Position: SUPPORT

Introduction: Cultivate + Craft, a consulting firm committed to the growth of value-added agriculture, agritourism, and the craft alcohol industry, wholeheartedly supports HB 1032. Recognized as a dependable consulting partner for the Maryland Wineries Association (MWA), the Brewers Association of Maryland (BAM), the Maryland Distillers Guild (MDG), and various other enterprises in the value-added and agritourism sectors.

Rationale for Passing This Legislation:

1. **Support for the Craft Beverage Industry:** This bill is vital for enhancing the economic vitality of nearly 200 Maryland craft beverage manufacturers that serve as key tourist destinations, supporting local economies and the broader state tourism industry.
2. **Boost in Tourist Awareness and Accessibility:** Implementing the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program will not only increase awareness of these businesses among travelers but also provide clearer guidance to attractions, particularly those in smaller or rural areas.
3. **Promotion of Regional Competitiveness:** The legislation ensures Maryland remains a competitive tourist destination by providing parity with neighboring states that have similar signage programs.
4. **Funding Assurance for Critical Agencies:** It ensures the continuous funding of this program, supporting the agencies that are vital for the state's tourism and economic development.
5. **Alignment with State Tourism Goals:** The bill aligns with the objectives of state tourism organizations and agencies, further promoting Maryland as a top tourist destination.

Notable Industry Statistics:

- Maryland's Alcohol Manufacturers, with over 275 entities, contribute significantly to the state's economy with an annual impact of \$3.4 billion and \$52 million in tax revenue, supporting over 8,500 jobs.
- Tourism in 2022 led to over \$19.4 billion in spending, generating more than \$2.3 billion in state and local tax revenue and saving Maryland households nearly \$1,000 in taxes.



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1783 Forest Dr, #343 Annapolis, MD 21401



kelly@cultivateandcraft.com
janna@cultivateandcraft.com



Cultivate + Craft's Endorsement: Cultivate + Craft is honored to support HB 1032, reflecting our commitment to advancing the interests of the craft beverage sector and agritourism in Maryland. Our collaboration with the MWA, BAM, and MDG underscores our dedication to fostering an environment where the agriculture and craft alcohol sectors can thrive. By backing this legislation, we aim to enhance the visibility, accessibility, and economic prosperity of Maryland's valued attractions and industries.

Conclusion: HB 1032 represents a significant step forward in supporting Maryland's craft beverage and value-added agriculture manufacturers and the state's tourism industry at large. Cultivate + Craft, alongside our industry partners, urges the passage of this bill, recognizing its potential to drive economic growth, enhance tourist experiences, and ensure the sustainability of vital industries that contribute to the fabric of Maryland's economy.



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1783 Forest Dr, #343 Annapolis, MD 21401



kelly@cultivateandcraft.com
janna@cultivateandcraft.com

House Bill 1032 - MDMO - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Mason

Position: FAV



February 23, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
House Environment & Transportation Committee

Re: House Bill 1032 – Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program

Position: *Support*

Chair Korman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (MDMO), I am writing to express our support for House Bill 1032 – Transportation – Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program. House Bill 1032 creates a system of supplemental guide signs to direct motorists to individual tourist attractions across the state. As an organization that is made up of 25 individual jurisdictions including Baltimore City and the Town of Ocean City, we request that priority be given to those jurisdictions that have previously applied for this program and are awaiting direction from State Highway Administration for implementation.

Tourism is an economic ecosystem, delivering opportunity and quality of life for Marylanders that is derived from visitor spending. The travel sector is an integral part of Maryland's economy and contributes over **\$2 billion** in state and local tax revenues a year. Remaining competitive in our regional market is essential to attracting new and repeat visitors to the State. Through the establishment of this program our state's tourist destinations will be showcased along our state highways and scenic byways.

An increased investment in tourism marketing equals an increase in state and local tax revenue, jobs, and economic impact. We respectfully request a favorable report and thank you for your dedicated support to the tourism industry.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cassandra M. Vanhooser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and 'V'.

Cassandra Vanhooser, Chair
Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations

HB1032_SupportTestimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Molli Cole

Position: FAV



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Susan O'Neill, Chair

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Testimony in Support with of
House Bill 1032 – Transportation – Highways – Tourist Areas and Corridor Signage Program
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 23, 2024

The Rural Maryland Council supports House Bill 1032 - Transportation - Highways - Tourist Areas and Corridor Signage Program. This bill establishes the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program to create a system of supplemental guide signs to direct motorists to eligible individual attractions by directing the motorists first to groups of attractions; establishing an Eligibility Committee to review attraction applications; requiring the Administration to prepare a certain signage plan; etc.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) welcomes the opportunity to highlight tourist areas and corridors throughout the State. Agritourism is one of the fastest growing segments of agricultural direct marketing taking place in rural areas across the State. Agritourism allows farmers to diversify their core operations and keep farmland in production while preserving scenic vistas and maintaining farming traditions. Agritourism helps educate the public about the importance of agriculture to a community's economic base, quality of life, history, and culture.

Marketing and a signage program are crucial for farmers in rural economies as they help to promote their products, increase visibility, and attract customers. By effectively marketing their goods and implementing a signage program, farmers can differentiate themselves from competitors, build brand recognition, and showcase the quality and uniqueness of their products. This not only leads to increased sales and revenue for the farmers but also helps to boost the local economy by drawing in tourists and supporting other local businesses. Furthermore, marketing and a signage program can create a sense of community and pride among farmers, fostering collaboration and partnerships that contribute to the overall growth and success of rural economies.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of House Bill 1032.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county, and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county, and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”

HB1031_Giganti_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Pamela Giganti

Position: FAV



61 VINEYARD

Writing in Favor of HB1032

My Name is Pam Giganti, and I am Co-Owner with my husband Mark, of 61 Vineyard in Damascus , MD. We have resided here for over 30 years. We have worked on this venture for over 10 years in the Upper Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve, opening the doors to our tasting room in October of 2021. We are close to Route 27 and Route 70. These highways are well traveled and hundreds of thousands of cars drive by daily on these roads, most of these travelers do not even know how close they are to our vineyard (and many others) Signage would help with this.

We are also neighbors with Loudon County Virginia, home to over 50 wineries, where so many Marylanders travel to visit them. So often folks will come in and say they just happened to find us they live 5 minutes or 10 minutes away. Wouldn't it be nice to have neighbors know we are in the neighborhood, and those traveling to wineries not to drive by us to reach Virginia Wineries! Signage would help with this.

You all know Signage Works! If not why would so many signs pop up before elections? Because Signage Works!

We need your help to let people know that they are in a great wine growing region, right here in Maryland. It is time that the State of Maryland recognizes what is happening, I mean truly world class wines are being grown and produced right here and right now in our State.

We live in a time when traditional methods ie: print media is non-existent or too expensive for small operators to afford. We used to have our local gazette but it has been gone for years now. Social Media is great but not everyone uses it. Google helps but only when someone types in Find a Winery Near Me. The one proven way to let people know is Signage. We are generating 9% tax on all our wine sales, our increased sales will mean your increased revenue as well. This is a small and simple thing for a small business like ours and so many others and it would make a world of difference.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this hearing and do please stop by if you find yourself in our area, we would love to show you around the Vineyard.

Pam Giganti, 61 Vineyard, Damascus, MD

Verbal HB1032Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ruth Toomey

Position: FAV



February 23, 2024

**The Honorable Marc Korman Chair
House Environment & Transportation Committee**

Re: HB-1032

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 Highways-Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program, HB1032. The Maryland Tourism Coalition is a 5016C, representing all sectors of the Tourism industry across the state.

The TAC sign program while considered a way finding program by the State Highway Administration, it also acts as a marketing tool for the businesses who are approved through the program's application process. The Maryland Tourism Coalition, along with the Maryland Office of Tourism and the State Highway Administration are the ones who are responsible for approving the applications. Currently, three counties have not completed construction (Anne Arundel, Howard and Baltimore) and 3 counties are placed on hold with back logged applications because the program ran out of funding (Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester). The way the program currently is funded is through the MD gas tax and falls under the Department of Transportation who has recently been told they need to cut their budget by 8%. This puts the program at the bottom of the list. The proposed legislation would have the applicant have to pay a fee for the design and installation of the sign as well as annual fee for the sign to remain on the highway. A revenue currently not included in the Transportation budget.

Prior to this sign program, where the six counties above are stuck is called State of Maryland Tourism Attraction Sign Program that hasn't been revised since 2015. There is an annual fee to participate, estimated at \$525-\$1000 a year and includes regular maintenance of the signs. As the program we are discussing, there is certain criteria to be met as well as guidelines for highway placement. There is also current signage displayed that have closed that still remains up on the highways today.

If we don't re-evaluate the TAC sign program, it will simply go away. There are businesses that are willing to pay for the signage. Again, they would have to fill out the application and meet the application requirements. They cannot just pay and get sign placement wherever they deem appropriate.

Tourism is a very important part of Maryland's economy. In fact, it is the 10th largest private sector employer, creating 187,296 jobs. 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. The TAC sign program helps both domestic and especially international visitors to their destination from the highways.

While the role of the State Highway Administration is to get drivers through the state swiftly & safely, the TAC signs are an important tool to navigating the state, especially in rural areas where cell phone reception may be spotty. And again, the signage helps keep people off their phones while driving. The signs, while not created to be a marketing tool, are just that. When you are driving down 70 and you see a sign for one of these attractions, you may not stop then, but you may on your way back or plan a trip for another time.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Toomey

Ruth Toomey, Executive Director

Maryland Tourism Coalition

ruth@mdtourism.org

Cell: 336-254-2648

HB 1032 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Helsing

Position: FAV



OUR MISSION:

Working to enhance the economic prosperity of greater Silver Spring through robust promotion of our member businesses and unrelenting advocacy on their behalf.

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairperson, Korman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 300 employers, mostly small and minority owned businesses, in greater Silver Spring and surrounding areas in Montgomery County, we are submitting these comments of strong support for House Bill 1032 Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program. We are convinced that this legislation will have a significant positive impact on the Silver Spring community as a whole, particularly those in the budding urban winery and brewing businesses. After all, it is hard to promote tourism, if no one knows where you are.

The Chamber has always been about making greater Silver Spring a thriving business community, a place where people want to live, work, and come to enjoy what so many of us love about Silver Spring – our wonderful arts and entertainment venues, our breweries, our “United Nations” of restaurants, and our outdoor gathering spaces. We believe that promoting commerce is the job of everyone in the state and codifying this law will ensure that the signage program is sustained, despite changes in leadership.

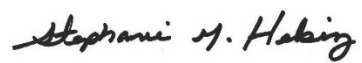
The Chamber has heard from businesses themselves, and residents who wonder why there is little to no signage promoting some of the unique offerings we have in Silver Spring. This is the case on Interstate 495, where the only signage for Exit 31, Georgia Ave, refers to Holy Cross Hospital and one sign about Wheaton Park, ironically with a golf symbol, which they don’t have, but nothing about gas, food, hotels, etc., as well as on the main arteries, Rte. 97 and 29, leading into downtown Silver Spring. The reality is, COVID recovery has been slower for Silver Spring than other areas in Maryland, and this lack of signage and overall visibility is one more deterrent that is impacting our business community and their ability to keep their doors open.

This situation, however, can begin to be addressed and this proposed legislation by Delegate Solomon does just that. It is past time that this signage program was revamped and made accessible to businesses. The Chamber would ideally like to see this be a state funded endeavor as originally intended, so as written presently, we urge that the cost “the administration considers appropriate (E)(3)(II)” to the business will indeed be within reason, realizing that the targeted industries for this program in Silver Spring are not large corporate entities, but in fact small businesses.

In summation, the Chamber wants all businesses to succeed. And we believe that this legislation begins to address the lack of visibility that has long plagued Silver Spring, which is ultimately the key to a thriving business community, a thriving Silver Spring, and a thriving Maryland. This is one more step that allows Silver Spring to take its rightful place as a business and residential hub, and economic engine in Maryland for those who live here, who work here, and who come here to enjoy the wonderful amenities we have to offer.

Should you have questions, don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Helsing
President & CEO

RJR-(WMSR.Allegany Museum) HB1032 Letter (SUPPORT)

Uploaded by: Victor Rezendes

Position: FAV



February 23, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman, *Chair*
Delegate Regina T. Boyce, *Vice-Chair*
House Environment & Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: *House Bill 1032: Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program – SUPPORT*

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the House E&T Committee:

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Allegany Museum and the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, we would like to take this opportunity to pledge our support for *House Bill 1032: Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program*.

As written, House Bill 1032 establishes a Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program for the State of Maryland. Its purpose is to create a system of supplemental guide signs to direct motorists to eligible individual attractions by directing the first to groups of attractions.

The Allegany Museum is a non-profit, volunteer organization committed to educating their visitors about the region’s rich history. Allegany Museum is helping promote Maryland as a destination for heritage tourism.

Two years ago, the Museum unveiled their new and interactive exhibit, *The Crossroads of America*, which traces the history of human movement through Cumberland and Allegany County from 1750 to 1900. The Museum is also home for Civil War artifacts, a presidential carriage, fossilized mammals from 500-700 thousand years ago, and archaeological evidence of Native American settlement in the area – these are just some of the treasures housed in the Museum for tourist and historic enthusiasts to view and enjoy.

The WMSR is a scenic railroad initially created to serve as a tourist destination to draw visitors to Allegany County and the surrounding cities of Cumberland and Frostburg. The organization has been in operation for thirty-five (35) years and has emerged as a significant economic engine for the entire region. Led by the historic locomotive (No. 1309), this train serves as an economic driver to attract visitors and regional citizenry to Western Maryland.

Since 2021, the Railroad has experienced record-breaking revenues, increased ridership, and cultivated new local relations and partnerships. Last year, the Railroad experienced an historic milestone of having over 75,000 tourists enjoy the train and our unique family-oriented events, such as *The Polar Express* and *Murder Mystery Dinner Trains*.

The successful growth of the Railroad has also extended well beyond Canal Place. The City of Cumberland has witnessed, firsthand, surrounding restaurants and other local businesses directly benefitting from the Railroad's tireless efforts in making this organization one of the centerpieces in downtown Cumberland. According to the *VisitMaryland.org*, the Railroad's provides approximately \$17 million in economic impact to the State of Maryland, annually.

The success and growth of our organizations is attributed to many favors including our staff, attractions/ events, and most importantly, how we market to our local communities and tourists (both in-state and out-of-state). Tourism gives the Cumberland area an essential economic boost and creates pride in the region's rich history. For the Museum and the Railroad, the creation of Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program will offer us new and exciting opportunities to attract new visitors to our organizations and Allegany County, while generating an increase in economic development and tourism dollars to Western Maryland.

It's for these reasons, that we support this legislation and respectfully request this committee to give House Bill 1032 a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support to our organizations in Cumberland, Maryland.

Sincerely,



Christopher Logsdon, *President*
Allegany Museum



Wes Heinz, *Executive Director*
Western MD Scenic Railroad

HB1032 - SHA - TAC_LOI_FINAL.pdf

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Wes Moore
Governor
Aruna Miller
Lieutenant Governor
Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1032 – Highways – Tourist Area Corridor Signage Program

Dear Chair Korman and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) respectfully offers the following information on House Bill 1032 for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 1032 seeks to codify, with certain modifications, the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage (TAC) program operated by the State Highway Administration (SHA). As background, TAC is a system of supplemental guide signs that directs motorists to eligible local attractions that meet certain operational conditions, include hours and days of operation.

The SHA is planning a decentralized, participant-funded program where local governments operate the program that works best for their needs, but where SHA provides guidance for TAC installations, retains the responsibility of ensuring signs are compliant with the MUTCD and other requirements for mounting signs on State right-of-way in the county, and recovers SHA’s costs in association with TAC program requests. The SHA is still finalizing details of what this model would look like for the TAC program moving forward.

House Bill 1032 as currently drafted includes certain provisions that would require SHA to commit resources to the TAC program in a manner that conflicts with SHA’s ongoing TAC program changes. The SHA has met with the sponsor to discuss this program and is actively working with the sponsor to ensure the bill language with amendments is aligned with the structure of the TAC program moving forward.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1032.

Sincerely,

Matthew Mickler
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Maryland State Highway Administration
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Pilar Helm
Director
Office of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090