

SB896 - FAV - MHLA.pdf

Uploaded by: Amy Rohrer

Position: FAV

MHLA

Maryland Hotel Lodging Association

Testimony in Support of SB 896

Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force
March 1, 2024 - Senate Finance Committee

The Maryland Hotel Lodging Association (MHLA) serves as the sole statewide trade association dedicated to advocacy for Maryland's 750+ hotels. Our industry employs more than 25,000 individuals and provides the state with \$1 billion in state and local taxes, \$5 billion in total wages and salaries, and \$9 billion in total gross domestic product.

31 hotels in Baltimore City, representing 76% of total rooms in the City, have dual membership in the local "Baltimore City Council of the MHLA" in addition to the statewide hotel association. 11 of our Baltimore City member hotel representatives are among the 37 directors serving on the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Board. Baltimore City hotels are highly invested in the future of the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) as it will have a significant and direct impact on the future of our industry.

Convention business is highly competitive given the economic impact it brings to a host city. When Baltimore hosts citywide conventions, that impact is felt by hotels both in the City and in the surrounding jurisdictions. Guests spend money not only on lodging but on transportation, food and beverage, shopping, entertainment and more. According to a 2023 study by Oxford Economics, for every \$100 a hotel guest spends on lodging, an additional \$220 is spent during their trip.

In addition to supporting jobs, the state and local tax revenue derived from visitor spending is a win for both state and local governments. We are hopeful the Baltimore Convention Center may be maximized as a source for driving hotel demand in Baltimore City and surrounding jurisdictions in the future.

As shared by the BCC, "FY15-19 saw a 15% decrease in group leads and the decline has continued post COVID. Destinations like Columbus, OH (+20%), Pittsburgh, PA (+14%), and Cleveland, OH (+46%), all with newer buildings, have become much more competitive in drawing conventions and leaving Baltimore with less. Smaller space limits the Baltimore Convention Center from drawing as many events. From 2013-2029 Baltimore has lost at least 389 events worth 1.8 million room nights and \$695 million in economic activity. Those numbers grow larger every day."

With passage of this legislation, the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association looks forward to providing input on this proposed task force, which we view as a critical step toward enhancing the competitiveness of the Baltimore Convention Center in the future.

For these reasons, the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association requests a Favorable Report on SB 896.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Rohrer, President & CEO
Maryland Hotel Lodging Association

MEDCO SB0896 Testimony - Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: J. Thomas Sadowski

Position: FAV



7 St. Paul Street, Suite 940 Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: (410) 625-0051: Fax (410) 625-1848

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Senate Finance Committee

Members, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Testimony on behalf of SB0896 - Favorable

Dear Senator Beidle and members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

The Maryland Economic Development Corporation submits this testimony in Support of SB0896 – Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force.

HB0897 is a crucial step towards reinforcing the Baltimore convention industry’s already strong return-on-investment. Through the legislation, HB0897 will create a task force to govern a study regarding the renovation, revitalization, or development of projects related to the Baltimore Convention site, as well as draw in industry stakeholders. The task force will convene and submit a report to the City, State, and/or Assembly by December of 2024.

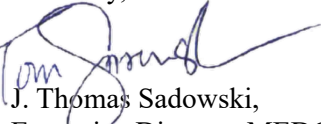
An updated and modernized convention center is crucial to a revitalized downtown Baltimore. The task force will allow Baltimore City to study and develop the next steps to update the convention site, with a focus on reflecting the needs of the city, both now and in the future.

An updated and flexible Baltimore City Convention Center will attract more industry stakeholders, tourists, and events to the downtown Baltimore area, which will in turn boost the local economy through hotels, restaurants, and regional attractions receiving more attention than they historically have. In the last decade, the State of Maryland has seen an average Return on Investment (ROI) of 4.3:1 in supporting the Convention Center operations through 4,900 jobs and \$30 million in state taxes, as well as sales tax benefits seen on the state level. An enhanced convention center would only increase those numbers.

Furthermore, it is becoming clear that the Baltimore City Convention Center is truly the premiere convention center for the State of Maryland. Centrally located, and close enough to other major attractions, the Center is truly poised to be the best Center on the East Coast. Currently, city-wide convention numbers are down, which highlights the need for an updated and revitalized Center. With an updated Center, Baltimore is poised to compete with other major cities on the East Coast, such as Boston, Columbus, Pittsburgh, and Savannah. A revitalized Center would give Baltimore an advantage over its competition and bring more revenue into the State.

For these reasons, the Maryland Economic Development Corporation endorses HB0897, and encourages the legislature to ensure the future success of downtown Baltimore, and in turn, the State. Thank you.

Sincerely,



J. Thomas Sadowski,
Executive Director, MEDCO

SB0896 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jill Carter

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0896 - Baltimore Convention and Tourism
Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force
Before the Finance Committee
On March 1st 2024**

Madame Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 0896 would establish a task force for the purpose of studying and making recommendations concerning the Baltimore City Convention (BCC) site and its surrounding areas before reporting their findings to the Baltimore City Mayor's office before December.

The BCC as it stands is currently 45 years old, with only one significant renovation that happened in 1996. Currently as it stands, 14 destinations are either renovating or building new convention centers to draw in tourism dollars to their own cities and away from Baltimore. SB0896 is a vital step towards solidifying the historically very strong return-on-investment for the Baltimore convention industry. Over the last ten years, the State of Maryland has seen an average ROI of 4.3:1 in its support of BCC operations, which annually supports 4,900 jobs and over \$30 million in state tax.

Among its competitors, the BCC is by far the oldest and smallest among its competition and has over \$100 million in deferred maintenance items due to the lack of adequate funding sources. The

BCC is a “general fund” city agency which receives no supplemental tax revenue. It runs at an annual deficit that has grown significantly over the last several years in support of its greater regional impact, and that deficit, by state legislation, is paid two-thirds by the State of Maryland and one-third by the City of Baltimore, correlating to the proportion of tax revenue historically seen at each level of government.

The task force would issue a third-party governance benchmarking report that compares Baltimore to its national competitors, authoring recommendations for how the BCC can better compete in the convention marketplace through changes to its long-standing business model. These changes would keep the BCC “in the game”, attracting business away from the more modern venues in surrounding areas, as well as increasing agency revenue and decreasing any state or city subsidies.

As such, I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0896. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Jill P. Carter

SB 0896 BCC Finance Testimony 030124.pdf

Uploaded by: Mac Campbell

Position: FAV

T H E
B A L T I M O R E C O N V E N T I O N
C E N T E R

March 1, 2024

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Mac Campbell, Executive Director, Baltimore Convention Center



RE: Senate Bill 0896 - Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) supports Senate Bill 0896, because it is a vital step towards solidifying the historically strong return-on-investment for the Baltimore convention industry.

Over the last ten years, the State of Maryland has realized an average ROI of 4.3:1 in its support of BCC Operations, which annually supports 4,900 jobs and over \$30 million in state tax.

Background - State of the BCC:

- Is a “general fund” city agency that receives no supplemental tax revenue. It operates with an annual deficit that has grown significantly over the last several years in support of the greater regional impact.
- The operating deficit, by state legislation, is paid two-thirds (2/3) by the State and one-third (1/3) by the City; correlating to the proportion of tax revenue historically seen at each level of government.
- At 45 years old, the BCC is the oldest and smallest in its competitive set. Currently, 14 destinations are either renovating or building new convention centers to draw tourism dollars to their city and away from Baltimore, and many more have had renovations since Baltimore’s last renovation in 1996.
- Has over \$100 million in deferred maintenance items due to the lack of adequate funding sources.
- For Baltimore to stay “in the game,” rental discounts are heavily offered to attract business away from more modern venues whereby reducing agency revenue and increasing the state’s subsidy. This strategy is not a viable long-term solution, and other tools need to be available.

Using a commissioned governance benchmarking report that compares Baltimore to its national competitors, the taskforce will author recommendations for how the BCC can better compete in the convention marketplace through changes to its long-standing business model and provide guidance for future renovation/modernization efforts.

We respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 0896 including all mayoral amendments.

CC: Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor’s Office of Government Relations



HB897-SB896 2-29-24 GBC.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Anthony Thomas

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

Written Testimony to the Finance Committee

SB.896/HB.897 – Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force

Sponsors:

Senator Carter (By Request - Baltimore City Administration)

February 29, 2024

Position: Support

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC), I write to you in support of SB.896, Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force.

As the leading voice for the private sector in the Baltimore region, GBC is actively engaged in collective efforts to grow a dynamic and inclusive regional economy. A revitalized downtown Baltimore is vital to that growth. But investment in our core will not happen without a modernized Baltimore Convention Center (BCC). When the BCC is successful, restaurants, hotels, and small businesses also grow and thrive, which in turn benefits residents of the entire region. Moreover, all sales tax from Baltimore accrues to the state, thus making a vibrant BCC impactful statewide. In that light, BCC is truly the State's Convention Center, too.

Unfortunately, leads for city-wide conventions are down, a trend that began even before COVID (-15% between 2015-19). This is in large part because the BCC is the oldest and smallest center in its comp set and as a city agency doesn't have the tools that its competition has (including secondary income sources to offset incentives and address deferred maintenance). Meanwhile, over a dozen cities have made significant renovations or constructed new buildings in recent years. We are now competing with not just the Pittsburghs, Bostons, and Nashvilles but also Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Savannah—all of which have modern centers that keep associations from even looking at Baltimore as a venue for their meetings and events.

By establishing this Task Force, Baltimore City will be able to study and develop recommendations on the future of the BCC site and ensure that any future plans and governance of the site will reflect the needs of the City. Such governance will not only make the current BCC nimble but will lay the groundwork for a renewed center that not only meets the industry's future needs but will be a key contributor to Baltimore's renaissance.

We hope you will issue a favorable report on this bill.

Sincerely,

Mark Anthony Thomas
President & Chief Executive Officer

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

SB896 Testimony_MTC.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Libber

Position: FAV



February 22, 2024

Maryland Senate
Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support of SB 896 - Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force

Chairperson Beidle 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 Senate Bill 896. 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 for a favorable report on this bill.

The Baltimore Convention Center is a cornerstone of the tourism industry in Baltimore City. Conventions, meetings, and events at the Convention Center drive businesses not only in the downtown business district but also the surrounding neighborhoods to downtown. Visitors to the convention center fill city hotels, restaurants, and retail stores. A thriving Convention Center leads to thriving businesses throughout the city.

However, the decline and lack of investment in the Convention Center over the years as a lead to a decline in business at the Convention Center which leads to a decline in the businesses that surround the Convention Center and the adjacent neighborhoods. Cities like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Columbus Ohio have all invested in their convention spaces with modern upgrades and additional or new buildings. Events that had a long history in Baltimore have left for these cities with their bigger and better convention spaces. Failure to invest in our own Convention Center will lead to more lost business further straining the downtown Baltimore commercial areas.

The Baltimore Convention Center is an anchor to the recovery and revitalization of downtown Baltimore. We have seen recent investment in the CFG Arena, planned redevelopment of Harbor Place, and planned renovations at the Camden Yards Stadium Complex. All these development projects surround the Convention Center. If we fail to bring the Convention Center up to the level of these redevelopment projects, it threatens their ability to reach their full potential as well.



**MARYLAND
TOURISM
COALITION**

Investment in tourism infrastructure like the Convention Center are a long-term investment in Baltimore's future. Tourism is a core element of the State's economy and is a revenue generator for Maryland. We need to make sure that we regain the loses we have experienced from our competitors passing us by over the last few decades. For these reasons, the Maryland Tourism Coalition asks this committee for a favorable report for this legislation and forward it for a full vote within the Senate of Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Libber
Legislative Chair
Maryland Tourism Coalition
mllibber@mdsoccerplex.org
301-528-1480

FAV - Maryland Stadium Authority - SB0896 (HB0897)

Uploaded by: Michael Frenz

Position: FAV



Wes Moore
Governor

Michael J. Frenz
Executive Director

Members

.....
Craig A. Thompson
Chairman

Leonard J. Attman
Joseph C. Bryce
William H. Cole, IV
Lee Coplan
Artis G.
Hampshire-Cowan
Maggie McIntosh
Manervia W. Riddick
Jodi C. Stalanonis
Justin A. Williams

Maryland Stadium Authority
The Warehouse at Camden Yards
333 W. Camden Street, Suite 500
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-333-1560
1-877-MDSTADIUM
Fax: 410-333-1888

www.mdstad.com

Voice: 800-201-7165
TTY: 800-735-2258

Letter of Support

SBO896 (HBO897) Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and
Operating Authority Task Force

Senate Finance Committee
Chair, Senator Pamela Beidle
Vice Chair, Senator Katherine Klausmeier

Maryland Stadium Authority
Michael J. Frenz, Executive Director

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair and honorable members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am Michael J. Frenz, Executive Director of the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA), a member of the Directors of the Baltimore Convention & Tourism Board, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide this Letter of Support for SBO896 (HBO897) Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force.

Baltimore, our state's largest city, home to the Camden Yards Sports Complex, is experiencing an influx of strategic public and private investment at area attractions and amenities with improvements in public safety and enhancements to transportation. We believe the synergies of a reimagined Camden Yards Sports Complex, modernized Baltimore Convention Center and revitalized Inner Harbor will be game changing in the highly competitive quest for city-wide bookings.

Investment in Baltimore Convention Center has strong fiscal benefits to the state through tax revenues, economic activity, job creation and media exposure while providing entertainment and business opportunities for both Marylanders and travelers. Infrastructure improvements to the Baltimore Convention Center also extends the use of facility for the next generation of business and leisure travelers.

Given the proximity of the Baltimore Convention Center, MSA's support of this legislation is consistent with the desire to encourage more vibrant activity at the Camden Yards Sports Complex and expanding opportunities for socializing, dining, and spending, before, during and after games, concerts, meetings and special events.

As you may be aware, in 1996 MSA completed the construction of the Baltimore City Convention Center expansion, MSA has since overseen a multitude of

feasibility studies, conducted due diligence and conceptual design of the proposed modernization. We treasure our reputation for unbiased, independent analysis, and our reputation for on-time, on-budget project delivery. Should this bill pass and MSA serves on this taskforce then oversees this work, we will work with the same diligence we apply to any study or project with which we are entrusted. We're here to serve.

For the reasons expressed in this letter, MSA urges a favorable report for SBO896 (HBO897) Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force and I would be delighted to answer any questions.

Testimony in Support of SB 896-Michael Howard.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Howard

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB 896

Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force

March 1, 2024 - Senate Finance Committee

As a proud resident and native of Baltimore, I am deeply invested in the success and prosperity of our city and the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC), I wholeheartedly support SB 896 and echo the sentiments expressed by the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association (MHLA). The establishment of a Task Force to study and recommend enhancements for the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) is not just timely but imperative for the revitalization of our city's convention and tourism industry.

The BCC is a cornerstone of Baltimore's economic and social landscape, drawing thousands of visitors each year and serving as a catalyst for local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues. The downturn in convention business post-COVID, as highlighted by MHLA, underscores the urgent need for strategic redevelopment and operational improvements to regain our competitive edge against cities with newer and more accommodating facilities.

Investing in the BCC is an investment in Baltimore's future. A revitalized convention center will attract a larger number and variety of events, generating significant economic activity and tax revenue for the city and state. It will also create numerous job opportunities, directly and indirectly, reinforcing the hospitality and tourism sector as a key pillar of our local economy.

I stand with MHLA in requesting a Favorable Report on SB 896. By collaborating on this initiative, we can ensure the Baltimore Convention Center becomes a beacon of innovation, inclusivity, and industry leadership, propelling our city to new heights in the national and international convention markets.

Respectfully,

Michael D. Howard Jr.

General Manager

Hyatt Place Baltimore

SB0896-FIN-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB0896

March 1, 2024

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 896 – Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 896.

SB 896 would create the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force. This Task Force would study and then make suggestions regarding the membership, purpose, and function of an Authority to lead the renovation and renewal of the downtown Baltimore Convention Center and neighboring Inner Harbor.

The downtown Baltimore area heavily contributes to the well-being of the City of Baltimore, and serves as a hub for tourism, industry, and business – not only for itself, but also surrounding counties. It is a world-class destination for those who live, work, play and visit the area. The Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) plays a significant role in this designation by attracting business meetings, competitive sports, and engaging conventions.

However, the BCC is woefully underfunded. Last year, the Maryland General Assembly provided \$25.7 million in funding for much needed repairs to the BCC. The majority of that funding was dedicated to emergency repairs needed for the facility. A portion of this funding was directed to modernization efforts. Those efforts include conducting a market study, producing architectural and mechanical drawings, and providing financial estimates for a future Convention Center. The Task Force as defined in SB 896 will use the results of those modernization efforts to inform the final recommendations as required in the legislation. In order to remain competitive with surrounding jurisdictions and continue to generate recurring revenue for both the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland, it is imperative that we take these steps now to plan for the future of the Baltimore Convention site.

For the above reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 896.

Shelonda Stokes Letter of Support Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelonda Stokes

Position: FAV



DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair - Senate Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Madam Chair Beidle:

I am writing to urge your support - and that of your Committee colleagues - for SB0896, as introduced by Senator Jill Carter to establish the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force to make recommendations regarding the proper authority to oversee the renovation, revitalization and financing, as well as ongoing management of the Baltimore Convention Center.

For over 40 years, it's been the mission of Downtown Partnership "to promote, advance, and stimulate the economic health and vitality of downtown." Essential to the vitality and economic strength of Downtown, however, is our ability to attract visitors from near and far and to compete with other major cities on the eastern seaboard especially, as well as cities known for their ability to attract major convention business consistently.

As Governor Wes Moore has asserted, "This is Maryland's decade, but Baltimore's time." And yet for us to fully realize the enormous potential before us requires that we invest in our essential assets to ensure that Baltimore is sufficiently competitive with other cities vying for business, residents, and tourism. Our Convention Center, now 45-years old, has had only one significant renovation in that period, almost 30-years ago, resulting in a backlog of deferred renovations estimated to cost at least \$100 million. And yet, at least 14 other destinations are currently making major investments in their convention centers, compounding the challenges of our colleagues at Visit Baltimore and the Convention Center to attract convention and tourism business going forward. The substandard condition of Baltimore's Convention Center complex, as I'm sure you know, has necessitated extending substantial discounts as a means to incentivizing decision makers to still choose Baltimore, despite superior convention facilities elsewhere. This unsustainable approach has only exacerbated the Convention

Page 2
The Honorable Pamela Beidle
SB0896

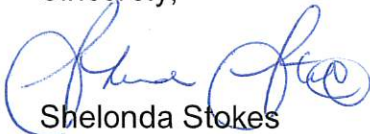
Center's annual deficit which the State and City - and ultimately Maryland taxpayers - must bear.

The establishment of this special Task Force is a vital step in the process of developing well-informed approaches to improving the Convention Center's business model, as well as how best to begin planning for the much-needed revitalization of the facilities. Delaying further this important work will only serve to jeopardize the longer-term economic prospects of Baltimore and our region.

On behalf of Downtown Partnership and all who are working to realize the potential that Downtown Baltimore represents and offers businesses, residents, and visitors, we encourage your Committee's and the Senate's full support for SB0896, and the successful consideration of its companion legislation in the House.

Thank you for your leadership and for prioritizing consideration of this timely legislation.

Sincerely,



Shelonda Stokes
President

SB 896_Commerce_Convention Center Task Force_FWA.p

Uploaded by: Kevin Anderson

Position: FWA



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

DATE: March 1, 2024
BILL NO: Senate Bill 896
BILL TITLE: Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance
POSITION: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 896 - Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force with amendments.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 896 establishes the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force to study the establishment of a Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority and make recommendations regarding the structure and functions of such an Authority. Commerce would staff the Task Force and the findings and recommendations would be due to the Mayor of Baltimore, the Governor, and the General Assembly by December 1, 2024.

Background:

As noted in the bill's preamble, the Baltimore Convention Center is vital to attracting business and tourism to the City of Baltimore as well as the State as a whole, but the Convention Center and surrounding area are in dire need of redevelopment and revitalization. Due to the scope of the project and the importance of the site, a thorough evaluation and engagement of stakeholders is necessary to ensure these efforts are successful.

Rationale:

Tourism is one of the State's top economic drivers, and for that reason Commerce, through the Maryland Office of Tourism, is focused on continuing to promote our great state as a travel destination to visitors both domestically and abroad. In calendar year 2022 Maryland was fortunate to welcome over 43 million visitors to the State, and their spending was over \$19 billion. This generated more than \$2.3 billion in state and local tax revenue, and supported more than 187,000 jobs. Investing in tourism brings a high return to our State, counties, and municipalities.

The Baltimore Convention Center and the area surrounding it should be one of the drivers of tourism activity and spending in Baltimore and the State as a whole, but redevelopment and revitalization are necessary for Baltimore to be successful in attracting major conferences to the City. The Task Force created through Senate Bill 896 will bring together a wide variety of persons that have an interest in the success of Maryland's tourism/convention industry and the need for a world-class convention asset to attract business/convention travelers. It is time now for the conversation to turn to action and to be bold in recommendations to innovate and turn the state-owned asset into a money maker.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments on Senate Bill 896.

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 896
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO.1

On page 3, in line 4 strike “and” and insert:

(15) A MEMBER OF THE MARYLAND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BOARD; AND

AMENDMENT NO.2

On page 3, in line 5 replace “15” with “16”

Explanation: This amendment adds a member of the Maryland Tourism Development Board to the individuals named to the Task Force. The Maryland Tourism Coalition is represented, but the Maryland Tourism Development Board advises and guides Commerce’s tourism promotional strategy and the Department feels a representative of that Board would bring valuable guidance and insight to this Task Force.

SB08962024BCCFinance.pdf

Uploaded by: Mia Blom

Position: FWA

VISIT BALTIMORE™

400 E PRATT ST, 10TH FLOOR
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

BALTIMORE.ORG

February 22, 2024

Chairwoman Beidle
3E Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Visit Baltimore is writing to support Senate Bill 0896 to create the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force, with the purpose being to study and make recommendations concerning the membership, purpose, and function of an authority to govern the renovation, revitalization, financing, and ongoing maintenance and management of the Baltimore Convention site and certain surrounding areas.

Over the last few years, we've seen progress in the revitalization of Baltimore. For those of us who live and work here, it's easy to see that Baltimore has all the makings of a world-class destination for meetings and conventions. And with the recent investments in development and transportation, we have more to offer visitors than ever before.

However, there is a glaring gap that stands between the present and the future we know to be possible - our outdated convention center. The last significant renovation was completed over 25 years ago, and as the years have passed our direct competitors have continued making major investments in their convention centers, leaving Baltimore in a precarious position to compete.

Failure to modernize the Convention Center is forfeiture of the economic prosperity that a reinvigorated tourist economy would create. From 2013 through 2022, we've lost the business of 426,000 possible attendees, equating to a loss of over 700,000 room nights and \$14 million in local tax revenue. The cost of inaction is not just loss of opportunity; it is a tangible loss of substantial economic benefit, year after year.

We consider this task force to be an essential element of a prosperous tourism economy. Not only is this an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the growth of this city, but it is an opportunity to put that responsibility in the hands of those who live and work in Baltimore. This is an opportunity to lead, to invest in our collective future, and to secure our place as a premier destination.

Sincerely,



Al Hutchinson
Visit Baltimore
President and CEO

SB0896 – MTA - Baltimore Convention and Tourism Re

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FWA



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

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – Senate Bill 896 – Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 896 with amendments and offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

Senate Bill 896 would establish the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force to study and make recommendations concerning the membership, purpose, and function of an authority to govern the renovation, revitalization, financing, and ongoing maintenance and management of the Baltimore Convention site and surrounding areas.

The Task Force will have the ability to make recommendations about how the Authority could influence the Convention site and the surrounding area. This area encompasses the Maryland Transit Administration’s (MTA) Light Rail and Core Bus routes, as well as the potential Red Line alignment. The MTA respectfully requests that the Administrator or their designee be named to serve on the Task Force, so as to provide input from the transit perspective.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 896 a favorable report with amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Einhorn
Director of Governmental Affairs
Maryland Transit Administration
410-767-0820

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090