

**HB1032\_Solomon\_FAV-JPR.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jared Solomon

Position: FAV

JARED SOLOMON  
Legislative District 18  
Montgomery County

DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

Appropriations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Oversight Committee  
on Personnel

Capital Budget

House Chair, Joint Audit and  
Evaluation Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 312  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3130 · 410-841-3130  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3130  
Fax 301-858-3053 · 410-841-3053  
Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 1032 Testimony – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program**  
**March 27, 2024**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on HB 1032, which codifies and reinvigorates the Maryland Tourist Area and Corridor (TAC) Signage Program operated by the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and 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 are subject to space availability, as determined by SHA regulations and requirements. Typically, 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 previously operated without funding or statutory authority. The bill would keep most of the program the same with some minor updates and additions. For example, 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.

It also adds provides flexibility to Commerce to add additional eligible attractions for signing with a generic symbol or simply using the words. This would allow for breweries and distilleries to be eligible for the program where they had previously been excluded. 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.

I worked closely with MDOT representatives to ensure we develop a coherent, effective, and equitable process to revitalize and expand the TAC program. The bill stipulates that MDOT and Commerce must work together to develop standards and procedures for determining eligibility for area businesses. Commerce will then develop a signage plan with any interested business based on

those standards and submit it to MDOT for review and approval. MDOT will ensure the signage plan complies with federal, state, and local laws and regulations as well as right-of-way regulations.

Lastly, under this bill each applicant who is approved for a sign under the TAC 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. This makes the program effectively budget neutral while still providing important attractions and local businesses with a significantly reduced cost means of advertising on state roadways.

The bill is supported by Cultivate & Craft, tourism Agencies, businesses, and chambers of commerce across Maryland. **The House of Delegates voted unanimously for HB 1032. Thank you for your consideration and I ask for a favorable report on HB 1032.**

# **HB1032 Favorable testimony 61 Vineyard.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

**HB1032 - SHA - TAC Signs\_LOI\_FINAL\_CO.pdf**

Uploaded by: Pilar Helm

Position: INFO



March 27, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

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

Dear Chair Smith and Committee members:

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

As amended, House Bill 1032 seeks to codify a modified version of 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, including hours and days of operation.

The SHA thanks the sponsor for collaborating on revisions to the bill as introduced. As amended, the bill establishes a participant-funded version of TAC where SHA 1) provides guidance for TAC installations and 2) retains the responsibility of ensuring signs are compliant with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and other requirements for mounting signs on State right-of-way. The amendments help offset State costs associated with continuation and adaptation of the TAC program while ensuring SHA and the Department of Commerce have the resources and authority to manage the program so as to benefit the attractions, tourists, and all road users.

Currently, the MUTCD authorizes states to operate tourist-oriented directional sign programs for businesses that derive a major portion of the business’s income or visitors from road users not residing in the area of the facility. The MUTCD limits use of these signs to rural highways, or highways normally characterized by lower volumes, higher speeds, fewer turning conflicts, and less conflicts with pedestrians. Accordingly, SHA will investigate alternatives to adapt the State’s program to ensure adequate coverage of attractions in urban and urbanized areas of the State.

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

Matthew Mickler  
Deputy Director (Acting)  
Office of Policy and Research  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
410-545-5629

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