

BENJAMIN F. KRAMER
Legislative District 19
Montgomery County

Finance Committee



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The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

To: Senator Paul D. Corderman and Delegate William J. Wivell

From: Senator Ben Kramer

Date: February 28, 2025

Re: SB0980/HB1327 Natural Resources-Maryland Heritage Areas Authority-Funding and Grants

I write to support the passage of SB0980/HB1327 Natural Resources - Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - Funding and Grants, a bill intended to lift the funding cap on Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) and allow for a greater share of property tax revenues to be budgeted through the state-side of Program Open Space (POS) for the MHAA. The current legislation caps the funding for MHAA at \$6 million. SB980/HB1327 would double this cap to \$12 million and does not guarantee funding for MHAA but allows for the program to receive a greater share of Program Open Space funding from the state's transfer tax, should it become available.

It is my understanding that this legislation is not a request for an increase of new money from the general fund and simply makes way for the possibility of a greater share of the restricted POS fund to further strengthen the economy at local and state levels. Maryland's thirteen (13) certified Heritage Areas cover a portion of every county, and these Heritage Areas contribute to our state's economy. They attract tourism and visitors, whose dollars support jobs, businesses, and tax growth in communities across our state.

The Montgomery County Heritage Area program is dedicated to stimulating the economy and seventeen (17) non-profit and local government entities have already submitted 'Intent to Apply' forms for FY26.

For these reasons, I support SB0980/HB1327.