



Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc.  
4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, MD 20781

Friday, February 28, 2025

## TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

Name: Meagan Baco, Executive Director

Organization: Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc.

Issue: **SUPPORT SB0980 (HB1327)**

### **Natural Resources - Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - Funding and Grants**

Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc., the nonprofit management entity of the state-certified Heritage Area in Prince George's County is in strong support of SB0980 which will increase investment in heritage tourism for economic development and cultural understanding across Maryland.

SB0980 will allow the Maryland Heritage Areas Program to receive up to \$12M annually, lifting the current cap of \$6M. There is a \$6M-\$8M gap in funding ability each year between excellent projects and available grant funded, stalling high-impact locally-based economic development projects.

Considering the circumstance of Maryland's budget, it is important to note that legislation does not guarantee funding but allows for this important program to receive a greater share of Program Open Space funding from the state's transfer tax, if and when it should become available.

Cultural tourism is a part of the solution to Maryland's budget and especially in Prince George's County considering our proximity to Washington, DC and our rich diverse history that visitors are seeking out. For every \$1 Maryland invests in this program, it gets \$7 back and 40,000 jobs are supported.

This legislation is needed now to make a pathway towards funding cultural tourism at the valuation that it deserves— heritage tourists stay longer and spent more at local businesses— and Maryland has the historic, cultural, and natural assets that visitors seek out to experience.

Respectfully,

Meagan Baco, Executive Director  
Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc.  
[meagan@anacostiatrails.org](mailto:meagan@anacostiatrails.org)