



Maryland Museums Association, Inc.
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TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

Meagan Baco, Chair, Maryland Museums Association, Inc.

SUPPORT SB0980 (HB1327)

Natural Resources - Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - Funding and Grants

The statewide Maryland Museums Association, Inc. nonprofit is in full support of SB0980 Natural Resources - Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - Funding and Grants.

There is no museum-specific funding source from the State of Maryland to our more than 400 museums — thus, the grants from Heritage Areas are essential. Eighty-five percent of the \$6M Maryland Heritage Area Authority allocation from Program Open Space is awarded as grants to every corner of the state. However, capped at \$6M, the Heritage Areas Program has a \$8M funding gap annually leaving important, interesting, and impactful cultural projects and programs on the vine.

We understand that SB0980 makes wise changes to the existing Heritage Area Program like increasing the top request amount per grant and reducing the match for nonprofits. That is why, even in this tough budget year, it is important that this legislation is passed.

Maryland's museums have a \$1.34B dollar positive financial impact on the state's economy (Oxford Economics, 2017). Moreover, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program contributes \$2.4B to the Maryland economy, supports and sustains 33,815 full-time and part-time jobs, and generates \$319.8M in economic impact (Parker-Phillips, 2019). What these numbers cannot show is the educational and emotional impact of increased cultural awareness to Maryland's diverse population.

Maximizing the economic and intangible impact of museums through tourism is a strategy that Maryland should immediately and intentionally employ on the eve of the US Semiquincentennial & MD Two Fifty (2026) and Maryland 400 (2034). Making improvements and supporting a raise to the funding cap for the Heritage Areas Program from \$6M to \$12M is an excellent start with SB0980.

Respectfully,

Meagan Baco, Chairperson
Maryland Museums Association, Inc.