

Name: Allison Weiss

Organization: Sandy Spring Museum

Issue: SB0980/HB1327

Position: Favorable

Date: February 26, 2025

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, March 4, 2025

House Environment and Transportation, March 5, 2025

I am writing in support of SB0980/HB1327, legislation that will open the possibility of a greater share of the restricted Program Open Space fund for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA). The statute will allow for up to \$12 million to be appropriated for MHAA. Most of the MHAA budget is awarded in grants to nonprofits and government units, for projects that contribute to preservation and place-based heritage tourism. The impact of MHAA grants is already well documented, and it will grow as the MHAA budget grows.

As a partner of the Heritage Montgomery Heritage Area (HM), I am proud of HM's contributions to the statewide heritage area program's impact: \$2.4 billion in economic contribution, 40,000 jobs supported and sustained, and \$320 million in local and state tax revenues generated annually.

Grants from MHAA has allowed Sandy Spring Museum to take on projects it otherwise would have not been able to fund. Such projects include improving access to Black history in the museum's archives, constructing an addition to the museum that will provide free rehearsal space to artists (many of whom are members of underserved communities), and creating new programs for the enjoyment of regional tourists.

I urge you to support SB0980/HB1327, which will make way for up to \$12 million in POS funds to be transferred to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

Thank you for your steadfast support of Maryland's Heritage Areas. For the sake of all Marylanders, please give SB0980/HB1327 your favorable vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Weiss  
Executive Director