

Tereance Moore

Board Member, Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area

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Hagerstown, MD

02/28/25

- Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
- House Environment and Transportation Committee

Subject: Support for SB0980/HB1327 – Lifting the Cap on Heritage Area Funding

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB0980 and HB1327, legislation that will lift the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) funding cap, enabling more robust investment in heritage tourism and preservation across our state. As a board member of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA), a local business owner, and a dedicated community advocate, I have witnessed firsthand the economic and cultural benefits that heritage tourism brings to Maryland.

Maryland's 13 certified Heritage Areas are vital economic engines, contributing \$2.4 billion annually to our state's economy, supporting 40,000 jobs, and generating \$320 million in state and local tax revenue. However, despite this tremendous impact, funding for the Maryland Heritage Areas Program has been capped at \$6 million annually. This limitation has led to an \$8 million gap over the last three years, stalling high-impact projects that could otherwise drive tourism, job creation, and local business growth.

As an HCWHA board member, I take pride in our efforts to facilitate MHAA grants and assist nonprofits and local government entities in securing funds for transformative heritage projects. In FY26 alone, HCWHA has received Intent to Apply notices from 34 organizations seeking more than \$1.6 million in funding for projects in Carroll, Frederick, and Washington Counties. Yet, under the current cap, many of these worthy projects will go unfunded resulting in missed economic opportunities for our local communities and the state.

Lifting the cap through SB0980/HB1327 does not create a spending mandate; rather, it allows up to \$12 million in Program Open Space funds to be allocated to MHAA if the funding is available. This investment will allow Maryland to:

- Fully fund community-driven projects that strengthen local economies, keeping 62% of every dollar spent in the community.
- Prepare for milestone celebrations, including America's 250th anniversary in 2026 and Maryland's 400th anniversary in 2034.
- Ensure diverse histories are preserved and shared—from the mountains of Western Maryland to the shores of the Chesapeake.

As a business owner and proponent of economic growth, I understand heritage tourism's critical role in sustaining small businesses, museums, and cultural sites, drawing visitors to Maryland and supporting the local economy. By increasing MHAA's funding capacity, we are investing in Maryland's future—creating jobs, supporting businesses, and ensuring our shared history continues to inspire generations to come.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB0980 and HB1327 and unlock the full potential of Maryland's Heritage Areas to benefit all Marylanders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tereance Moore', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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