



January 17, 2025

The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair  
House Economic Matters Committee

**Re: House Bill 29 - Electronic Payment Transactions - Interchange Fees - Calculation and Use of Data**

Position: ***Oppose***

Dear Chair Wilson and Vice Chair Crosby,

On behalf of Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, I am writing to express our **opposition** to House Bill 29. Annapolis and Anne Arundel County is one of Maryland's most popular tourist destinations, and the success of our tourism industry is directly tied to the convenience and efficiency of the electronic payment systems that visitors and residents rely on every day. We strongly believe that the provisions outlined in House Bill 29 that require a separation of nearly every electronic payment transaction into multiple parts could negatively affect not only the tourism sector but also the broader economy.

According to Tourism Economics, in 2023 more than 6.8 million people visited Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, generating \$4.1 billion into the tourism economy and producing a significant economic impact for our local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, shops, and attractions. The majority of these visitors use credit cards for their travel-related purchases, including booking accommodations, dining, and enjoying local experiences. These transactions help support local jobs and contribute directly to the economic vitality of our community.

The credit card reward programs, such as airline miles and travel points, are an important incentive for consumers to visit our area. For many, these rewards make travel more affordable and convenient, and, as a result, they drive visitor spending here in Anne Arundel County and the surrounding areas. In fact, the loyalty programs tied to credit cards and travel-related purchases encourage repeat visits and help bring in new visitors, all of which is critical to the continued growth of our tourism sector.

Requiring the separation of electronic payment transactions into multiple parts, as proposed in HB 29, introduces unnecessary complexity and risk. These changes could disrupt the smooth operation of our existing payment systems, potentially deterring visitors from using their credit cards as they normally would. For all these reasons, we respectfully request an **unfavorable** report and thank you for your dedicated support to the tourism industry.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristen Pironis", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Kristen Pironis  
Executive Director