

January 17, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

Re: Senate Bill 50: Local Government - Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitors Bureau Designation

Position: **Favorable**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (VAAAC) endorses and is in support of the proposed Senate Bill 50 (SB50) to officially change and update the name of the organization from “Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitor’s Bureau” to “Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County” in existing legislation.

As a nonprofit, partnership-focused destination marketing and management organization, VAAAC’s mission is to foster a welcoming destination and promote tourism on behalf of our visitors and in support of our community. VAAAC’s efforts are guided by four core priorities: to cultivate and lead a diverse and inclusive hospitality and tourism community; to collaborate with partners across the destination; to drive prosperity and sustainability; and to strengthen organizational capacity.

Founded in 1982 as the Tourism Council of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (TCAAAC), a non-profit affiliate of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Annapolis, the County Council passed a resolution recognizing TCAAAC as the official tourism arm of Anne Arundel County. In 1990, the organization was officially incorporated and rebranded to Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitor’s Bureau and more recently, the organization evolved to its present and official name: Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County. The growth and investment in local tourism resulted in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County boasting a \$4.1 billion tourism economy, welcoming more than 6.8 million visitors in 2023 (Source: Tourism Economics). 2025 marks the organization’s 35th year as the official tourism office.

With offices located in the heart of Annapolis, VAAAC welcomes more than 85,000 visitors on average each year into the Visitor’s Center at 26 West Street, located just a few steps away from the Maryland State House. In 2025, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County will open a footprint for tourism at BWI Marshall Airport or promote the destination and region.

We are grateful for your ongoing support of a thriving tourism industry in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County and the entire State of Maryland, and we appreciate the update and clarification provided by the proposed SB50.

Sincerely,



Kristen Pironis
Executive Director
Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County