

**Rose D. Chaney/6 S. Pendleton Ct./Frederick, MD 21703**

**Organization: AARCH Society of Frederick, MD**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, March 4, 2025**

**House Environment and Transportation, March 5, 2025**

**Issue: SB0980/HB1327**

**Position: Favorable**

March 1, 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). Most of the MHAA budget is awarded in grants to nonprofits and government units, for projects that contribute to place-based heritage tourism. The impact of MHAA grants is already well documented, and it will grow as the MHAA budget grows.

As a Board member of the ARCH Society in Frederick, MD located in the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, a nonprofit serving Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties, we are proud of the MHAA grant support that has contributed to statewide heritage area program impact: \$2.4 billion in economic contribution, 40,000 jobs supported and sustained, \$320 million in local and state tax revenues generated annually.

AARCH Society's mission to share and preserve the African American stories and history of Frederick County that are often untold. We are in the process of opening an African American Heritage Center this year - a landmark project dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich history and contributions of African Americans in Frederick. The Heritage Center will be a beacon of education, inspiration, and cultural preservation, serving as a bridge between past and future generations.

For FY26, we will be requesting MHAA grant support for the vibrant exhibits and programs we will be providing, as well as preserving our vast collection of documents and artifacts.

When funded under the current statute, up to \$6 million may be budgeted annually for MHAA, with \$5.1 million available for grants. That's far too little; many worthy projects are unfunded, which means loss of ROI for local communities and the state. Please support SB2980/HB1327, which will make way for up to \$12 million in POS funds to be transferred to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of allowing more funds for the MHAA which will benefit all Maryland residents.

Sincerely,

Rose Chaney