



February 28, 2025

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: HB1327 – Natural Resources – Maryland Heritage Areas Authority – Funding and Grants**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the House Environment and  
Transportation Committee:

On behalf of Visit Frederick (the Tourism Council of Frederick County), the designated and  
official destination marketing organization for Frederick County, MD, please accept this letter of  
support for HB1327 – Natural Resources – Maryland Heritage Areas Authority – Funding and  
Grants.

This 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 member of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA) Board of Directors, I am  
proud of HCWHA contributions 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.

For FY26, HCWHA has received Intent to Apply notices from 34 nonprofits and government  
entities that will seek more than \$1.6 million in MHAA project grant awards. The projects will  
take place in Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties. We count our work to facilitate MHAA  
grants and assist grant applicants to present competitive applications, as one of the  
organization's highest, and most rewarding, duties. Yet, 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.

We encourage everyone on the House Environment and Transportation Committee to support  
HB1327. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Ziedelis". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Dave Ziedelis  
Executive Director