

HEART OF THE CIVIL WAR

Name: Elizabeth Scott Shatto, Executive Director



Organization: Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area

Issue: SB0980/HB1327

Position: Favorable

Date: House Environment and Transportation, March 5, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of SB0980/HB1327. The time is right to establish the possibility of a greater share of Program Open Space funds to support the important investment made by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority in our revenue-producing place-based assets.

Together, Maryland's 13 heritage areas bring about economic benefit to the tune: \$2.4 billion in economic contribution, 40,000 jobs supported and sustained, \$320 million in local and state tax revenues generated annually.

CARROLL COUNTY

Hampstead
Manchester
Mount Airy
New Windsor
Sykesville
Taneytown
Union Bridge
Westminster

Potentially, SB980 will double those impact numbers. MHAA grants support heritage tourism focused projects, but current law caps the budget at \$6 million, \$5.1 of which goes to our partners for grants. Each year, well-scoring, worthy projects go unfunded. On average there's an \$8 million funding gap and sometimes it is much more.

In our heritage area, 34 projects have been identified in Intent to Apply submissions for FY26, including the following that promise great ROI:

FREDERICK COUNTY

Brunswick
Burkittsville
Emmitsburg
Frederick
Middletown
Mount Airy
Myersville
New Market
Rosemont
Thurmont
Woodsboro

- \$100,000 request from the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society to extend the African American Cemetery Interpretive Trail and to develop a Cemetery Preservation Plan which will be invaluable to DNR for site management.
- \$54,750 request from the Claggett Center in Buckeystown for rehabilitation of the Buckingham Industrial School Building.
- \$50,000 request from the City of Brunswick to support a visitor experience plan linking several projects in progress that will extend the City's heritage tourism appeal to visitors coming into the city via the C&O Canal and Potomac River.
- \$100,000 request from AARCH (African American Culture and Heritage Society) - for the final work necessary to prepare the new Heritage Center for opening - serving our residents and a growing African American travel market.
- \$100,000 request from the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, for an updated exhibition experience including more inclusive interpretation throughout - a major overhaul of a visitor experience that promises huge heritage tourism impact.
- \$100,000 request for the final phase of American Hall restoration (African American resource, strong Civil War connections, will include a visitor experience to boost heritage tourism).

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Boonsboro
Clear Spring
Funkstown
Hagerstown
Hancock
Keedysville
Sharpsburg
Smithsburg
Williamsport

SB980 does not carry a spending mandate but it would allow for future MHAA appropriations of **up to** \$12 million. Passing the law now means that when it makes fiscal sense for the state to take more advantage of the power of Maryland Heritage Areas to generate more tourism spending, create and sustain more jobs, and increase local and state tax bases, we will be poised and ready. This is forward thinking at a time when it is most needed.

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For the sake of all Marylanders, we hope SB0980/HB1327 will succeed.



Debby Ellen Moone, Trustee, Board of Trustees

Organization: Historic Rocky Springs Chapel, Inc.
7817 Rocky Springs Road
Frederick, MD 21702

Issue: SB0980/HB1327

Position: Favorable

Date: February 28, 2025

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, March 4, 2025

House Environment and Transportation, March 5, 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). 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 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 Board of Trustees of the nonprofit organization, Historic Rocky Springs Chapel, Inc. (HRSC), my local heritage area is the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA), a nonprofit serving Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties. I am proud that HRSC, with MHAA grant support, 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.

HRSC owns Rocky Springs School House (built 1839), one of the oldest remaining one-room field stone schools in Maryland. It is on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), the Frederick County Register of Historic Places, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and is a Maryland Historical Trust Easement property. HRSC is currently involved in a multi-phase project designed to rehabilitate and restore the school to its original appearance and provide for its adaptive reuse as a public center for historical interpretation and research about the history of the school and the people and events associated with it. Emphasis will be placed on the Civil War era since a cavalry skirmish occurred near the school on July 8, 1864, and the school is depicted on two historical maps documenting the fighting. A Civil War Trails marker (paid for in part by a HCWHA mini-grant) next to the school currently interprets the skirmish for the public.

MHAA grant funds have been critical to HRSC's ability to save this historical treasure for the community and take concrete steps to transform it into a vibrant tourist destination. Decades of deferred maintenance led to the school's severe decay. Missing shingles allowed water to penetrate the original timber roof structure which eventually caused it to rot and collapse into the school's interior. This put great stress on, and severely damaged, the tops of the school's stone walls putting them in imminent danger of collapse. In addition, exterior masonry and whitewash were not maintained properly which allowed water to penetrate the mortar on all of the school's

underlying stonework and brickwork. As a result, the mortar deteriorated. This caused significant cracks in the structure, numerous stones and bricks to fall from its walls, and the chimney to collapse. In 2015, HRSC assumed ownership of the school and by 2019 had raised the \$26,910.00 needed to initially stabilize it. The Phase I stabilization project was paid for in part by a MHAA Capital Grant of \$13,455.00, and was completed in June 2020. During the Phase I project the school's severely deteriorated collapsed roof was removed, the building's original construction was documented to inform later phases of the school's preservation, the rocks and bricks that had fallen from the school's deteriorated walls were salvaged for use in later phases of the school's restoration, and a temporary EPDM roofing membrane was placed on top of the school's stone walls and cornice to protect them from further damage by the elements until additional phases of the school's restoration could commence.

Phase II of the school's restoration cost \$91,051, was completed in May 2023, and was also paid for in part by a MHAA Capital Grant in the amount of \$18,587. During the Phase II project portions of the school's stone walls, brick chimney and cornice were restored. For FY26, we are requesting MHAA grant support in the amount of \$41,202 for an \$82,404 project involving reconstruction of the timber roof framing on the school. Rehabilitation of this historic treasure and the knowledge that it will soon be open to the public as a cultural resource has caused great excitement in the community and well beyond the borders of our state.

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.

For the sake of all Marylanders, I hope you will support SB0980/HB1327.

Very sincerely,

Debby Ellen Moone
Trustee, Board of Trustees
Historic Rocky Springs Chapel, Inc.