

Testimony in Support of SB 672

Economic Development - Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority - Established

Senate Finance Committee - February 20, 2025

The Maryland Hotel Lodging Association (MHLA) serves as the sole statewide trade association dedicated to advocacy for Maryland's 750+ hotels. Our industry employs more than 27,000 individuals and provides the state with \$2.4 billion in state and local taxes, \$7.2 billion in total wages and salaries, and \$10.6 billion in spending by hotel guests contributing to Maryland's economy.

Last year, MHLA was pleased to appoint a hotel representative to serve on the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force. In its final report, this task force recommended the establishment of a joint authority to govern the Baltimore Convention site and Visit Baltimore. We support the legislation before you, as it would establish the make-up and authority of the "Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority."

We believe this authority will bring structure to plans surrounding future convention center operations, maintenance and funding as well as the marketing of Baltimore City as a convention destination. The growth of Maryland's lodging industry, especially in Baltimore City and outlying regions, is closely tied to future convention center bookings. We are hopeful that the establishment of this authority will maximize the Baltimore Convention Center's future impact on our industry and our state.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on <u>SB 672</u>.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Rohrer, President & CEO