



**MARYLAND
TOURISM
COALITION**

February 27, 2026

Maryland House of Delegates
Economic Matters Committee
Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support HB1078 - Economic Development – Maryland Stadium Authority – Carroll Park Soccer Stadium and Facility

Chairman Barnes and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Libber, and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC). The Maryland Tourism Coalition is a statewide trade organization representing businesses and organizations across all sectors of Maryland's tourism economy — including destination marketing organizations, hotels, attractions, restaurants, cultural institutions, transportation providers, and outdoor recreation entities. Our mission is to support and strengthen Maryland's tourism industry through education, networking, and advocacy. **I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1078 (2026), authorizing the Maryland Stadium Authority to finance and support the development of a soccer stadium and related facilities at Carroll Park.**

This legislation represents a strategic investment in Maryland's tourism economy, workforce development, and long-term competitiveness in the growing global sports marketplace.

Tourism Impact: A Year-Round Destination Asset

Sports tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the travel industry. Unlike single-event venues, a professional soccer stadium and multi-use facility can host:

- Professional league matches
- National and international exhibitions
- Youth and collegiate tournaments
- Concerts and cultural festivals
- Community sporting events

Each event generates out-of-state visitation that drives spending in:

- Hotels and short-term accommodations
- Restaurants and bars
- Transportation services
- Retail and entertainment venues



Visitors attending multi-day tournaments — particularly youth soccer events — are among the highest per-capita tourism spenders because they travel with families and teams. A facility at Carroll Park positions Baltimore and Maryland to capture this expanding market, competing with states that have aggressively invested in sports infrastructure.

Strengthening Maryland's Competitive Position

Neighboring states have made significant investments in modern sports and entertainment venues to attract tourism dollars. Without comparable facilities, Maryland risks losing:

- Major regional tournaments
- International friendlies
- Convention and event tie-ins
- Broadcast exposure tied to nationally televised matches

HB 1078 allows Maryland to remain competitive in attracting marquee events that elevate the State's profile nationally and internationally.

Soccer, in particular, connects Maryland to a global audience. International matches and tournaments bring visitors from across the country and abroad — expanding Maryland's tourism reach far beyond traditional markets.

Economic Multiplier Effects

Investment through the Maryland Stadium Authority ensures:

1. Construction Jobs and Local Contracting

The development phase creates skilled construction employment and contracting opportunities for Maryland-based firms.

2. Permanent Hospitality Employment

Ongoing stadium operations support long-term jobs in:

- Facility management
- Event staffing
- Food and beverage services
- Security and logistics

3. Increased Tax Revenue

Visitor spending generates:

- Sales and use tax revenue
- Hotel occupancy tax revenue
- Income tax revenue
- Local business growth



Tourism-related tax revenue reduces reliance on residential taxpayers and broadens Maryland's fiscal base.

Revitalization and Place-Making

Carroll Park represents a powerful opportunity for urban revitalization. A thoughtfully developed stadium and surrounding facilities can:

- Activate underutilized land
- Encourage mixed-use development
- Increase property values
- Support small, locally owned businesses

Modern sports venues are no longer isolated structures; they are anchors for vibrant districts that combine recreation, dining, retail, and community gathering spaces. This type of place-making strengthens Baltimore's appeal as a leisure and event destination.

Youth Sports Tourism and Community Benefit

Maryland has one of the strongest youth soccer cultures in the region. A state-of-the-art facility would allow Maryland to:

- Host regional and national youth tournaments
- Attract club competitions currently held out-of-state
- Retain spending that Maryland families currently take elsewhere

Youth tournaments often fill hotels during non-peak tourism seasons, smoothing demand cycles and providing consistent economic activity.

A Strategic Investment in Maryland's Tourism Future

HB 1078 is not simply a stadium bill — it is an economic development initiative that leverages sports tourism to:

- Increase visitor spending
- Create jobs
- Strengthen Baltimore's and Maryland's brand
- Expand long-term tax revenues

By empowering the Maryland Stadium Authority to move forward with this project, the General Assembly signals that Maryland intends to compete — and win — in the rapidly growing sports tourism market.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give House Bill 1078 a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.



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Respectfully submitted,

Matt Libber
Legislative Chair
Maryland Tourism Coalition