

January 27, 2026

Senator Paul D. Corderman  
403 James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB0638

Dear Senator Corderman,

The Beach to Bay Heritage Area (BBHA) is in full support of legislative initiative SB0638, which would lift the cap on Maryland Heritage Area funding. This legislation would allow the Maryland Heritage Areas Program to receive up to \$12 million annually, removing the outdated \$6 million cap currently in place. Importantly, SB0638 does not mandate new funding; it simply provides the flexibility for the program to grow in future years as state revenues permit.

The Maryland Heritage Areas Program is a proven, community-driven economic development tool that supports preservation, tourism, and local revitalization efforts across the state. Statewide, the program generates an impressive \$319.8 million in tax revenues, demonstrating a strong return on investment for Maryland taxpayers.

Within the Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Heritage Area funding has supported transformative projects including the renovation of Henry's Hotel—Ocean City's first boarding house and hotel for African Americans—new exhibits at the historic Germantown Rosenwald School, repairs to Furnace Town's Nassawango Iron Furnace, restoration of the skipjack City of Crisfield, and a collaborative traveling exhibit with the Pocomoke Indian Nation. These five projects alone leveraged more than \$250,000 in funding to strengthen our regional economy and preserve critical heritage assets.

BBHA appreciates your continued support of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority and respectfully urges favorable consideration of SB0638.

Sincerely,



Lisa Challenger  
Executive Director



14 South Main Street  
Berlin, MD 21811  
BeachesBaysWaterWays.com  
info@BeachtoBayHeritage.org  
410-251-3163

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## **Organizations in the Beach to Bay Heritage Area Who Have Received Funding Support for Capital and Non-Capital Projects Who Support SB0683**

- Berlin Heritage Foundation
- City of Salisbury
- Crisfield Area Chamber of Commerce
- Delmarva Discovery Museum, Pocomoke City
- Furnace Town Foundation, Snow Hill
- German Town School & Heritage Community Center, Berlin
- Henry Hotel Foundation
- Museum of Eastern Shore Culture at Salisbury University
- Ocean City Museum Society, Ocean City
- Pocomoke Indian Nation, Somerset County
- Somerset County Historical Trust
- Town of Snow Hill
- Tyree African Methodist Episcopal Church, Berlin



# Mayor & Council of Berlin

10 William Street, Berlin, Maryland 21811

Phone 410-641-2770 Fax 410-641-2316

[www.berlinmd.gov](http://www.berlinmd.gov)

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Mary Bohlen



Senator Paul D. Corderman  
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Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB0638

Dear Senator Corderman,

I am writing to express strong support for SB0638, legislation that would lift the current \$6 million cap on Maryland Heritage Areas funding. This bill does not mandate new spending. It simply removes an outdated limitation so the program can grow responsibly in future years as state revenues allow.

The Maryland Heritage Areas Program has consistently proven to be one of the State's most effective economic development tools. It supports locally driven preservation and tourism initiatives that strengthen communities while generating significant economic return. Heritage and cultural visitors stay longer, spend more, and support our small businesses, restaurants, lodging establishments, and Main Streets.

In our region, heritage funding has supported meaningful projects that preserve historic structures, expand educational exhibits, and celebrate diverse cultural stories. These investments leverage private and local dollars, protect important assets, and create experiences that attract visitors year after year.

Despite growing demand and rising costs, grant levels have not increased in decades. The current cap leaves millions of dollars in potential impact unrealized each year and delays high impact projects that are ready to move forward. Lifting the cap will allow the program to meet today's realities and position it for responsible growth in the future.

At a time when communities are seeking sustainable economic development solutions, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program remains a proven, results driven investment. I respectfully urge your support of SB0638.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ivy Wells  
Economic and Community Development Director  
Town of Berlin  
Board Member: Beach to Bay Heritage Area