

February 16, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chairman, Senate Budget & Taxation
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 638 - Natural Resources - Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - Funding and Grants

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Senate B & T Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, representing almost 700 organizations with over 40,000 employees, to express my enthusiastic support for Maryland Senate Bill 638, sponsored by Senator Paul Corderman, which seeks to lift the cap on funding for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA).

Maryland's rich history and diverse cultural heritage are precious assets that deserve our protection and promotion. The MHAA plays a vital role in preserving and interpreting our state's historical landmarks, fostering economic development, and enriching the tourism experience. By allowing more funding the MHAA, we ensure that future generations can appreciate and learn from the stories that shaped our communities. These heritage areas not only celebrate our past but also provide essential resources and support to local economies by attracting visitors and fostering community engagement.

Furthermore, the economic benefits of investing in heritage tourism cannot be overstated. With targeted funding, we can enhance our marketing efforts, improve visitor services, and create captivating programs that highlight the unique stories of Maryland. This, in turn, generates revenue that will benefit local businesses and create jobs in the tourism sector.

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce supports Senate Bill 638 as it lifts the cap on funding of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. Your leadership in this matter demonstrates a commitment to preserving our history and strengthening our communities. Thank you for leading this important initiative, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on our state.

Sincerely,



Paul Frey, IOM
President & CEO

