

SB0497 WCCC Support Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Jim Kercheval

Position: FAV



- Washington County Government
- City of Hagerstown
- Hagerstown Community College
- Washington Co. Free Library
- Town of Williamsport
- The Greater Hagerstown Committee, Inc.
- Hagerstown-Washington Co. Chamber of Commerce
- Visit Hagerstown (Local Convention & Visitor's Bureau)
- CHIEF (Hagerstown-Washington Co. Industrial Foundation)

Washington County Community Coalition Lobbyist: John Favazza, Esquire Mannis Canning & Associate. 410.263.7882 jfavazza@maniscanning.com

February 13, 2026

The Honorable Guy J. Guzzone
Chairman, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Ref; Senate Bill 0497 *Property Tax - City of Hagerstown and the Hagerstown Multi-Use Sports and Events Facility, Inc. - Exemption*

Dear Senator Guzzone,

On behalf of the Washington County Community Coalition (WCCC), I write to express our unanimous and unequivocal support for Senate Bill 0497.

Formed in 2005, the WCCC advocates before the Maryland General Assembly on matters of critical importance to Washington County. The Coalition advances legislation only when it has unanimous approval from its partners, reflecting broad alignment across local government, education, economic development, tourism, and business leadership. Our partners include Washington County Government, the City of Hagerstown, Hagerstown Community College, the Washington County Library System, the Town of Williamsport, the Town of Smithsburg, Visit Hagerstown (Convention & Visitors Bureau), the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, CHIEF (Washington County Industrial Foundation), and the Greater Hagerstown Committee.

Senate Bill 0497 is essential to ensuring the long-term operational viability of two transformative downtown investments: the Hagerstown Fieldhouse and the Hagerstown Multi-use Sports and Entertainment Center (Meritus Park). These facilities were developed to serve dual purposes — providing high-quality public recreational and entertainment opportunities while acting as economic engines for downtown revitalization.

Since opening, both facilities have generated measurable positive impacts. They have increased downtown foot traffic and tourism, strengthened small business activity, stimulated reinvestment in previously vacant and underutilized properties, and created accessible employment opportunities within walking distance for low-income neighborhoods. These projects are functioning as intended: as anchors that catalyze private investment and expand tourism-related economic activity.

However, their financial models operate on narrow margins typical of public-oriented sports and event venues. The imposition of property taxes would materially impair their ability to break-even operationally, undermining both fiscal sustainability and the broader economic development returns these projects are designed to produce. Without the requested exemption, the long-term viability of these facilities would be placed at significant risk—effectively negating the substantial public and private investment already made.

Senate Bill 0497 represents a prudent and strategic policy decision that protects existing investments, preserves jobs, sustains downtown revitalization momentum, and ensures continued access to recreational and entertainment opportunities for our community.

The Washington County Community Coalition respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 0497.

Sincerely,

Paul Frey, *Managing Partner for The Washington County Community Coalition*

SB 497 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV

PAUL D. CORDERMAN
Legislative District 2
Frederick and Washington Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Education, Business and Administration



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11 Bladen Street, Room 403
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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Paul.Corderman@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 18, 2026

Senate Budget & Tax Committee
Chair Guy Guzzone
Vice Chair Jim Rosapepe
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony In Support of SB 497 - Property Tax - City of Hagerstown and the Hagerstown Multi-Use Sports and Events Facility, Inc. - Exemption

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget & Tax Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 497. SB 497 provides a property tax exemption for property owned by the City of Hagerstown and the Hagerstown Multi-Use Sports and Events Facility, Inc., when that property is used primarily for public social, recreational, and entertainment purposes. Facilities of this nature are community assets that promote tourism, economic development, and quality of life. By clarifying their tax-exempt status, the bill ensures that public-purpose properties are treated consistently with their civic mission.

The bill also applies the exemption retroactively. This balanced approach supports a valuable community asset while preserving local flexibility.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 497.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. D. Corderman".

Senator Paul D. Corderman – District 2, Washington & Frederick Counties

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Uploaded by: SCOTT Nicewarner

Position: FAV



CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Scott A. Nicewarner
City Administrator

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Telephone: 301.766.4161 • TDD: 301.797.6617 • Website: www.hagerstownmd.org

February 10, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Tax Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **FAVORABLE – SB 497 – Property Tax – City of Hagerstown and the Hagerstown Multi-Use Sports and Events Facility, Inc. – Exemption**

I am writing on behalf of the Mayor and Council of the City of Hagerstown to express their strong support for granting a tax exemption of property owned by the City used primarily for public social, recreational, and entertainment purposes as well as for Hagerstown Multi-Use Sports and Event Facility, Inc (Meritus Park). These facilities represent a significant investment in the long-term health, economic vitality, and community engagement of the Hagerstown region.

The Hagerstown Fieldhouse, specifically, is expected to serve as a year-round venue for youth athletics, tournaments, recreational programming, and community events, drawing visitors from across the region and generating meaningful economic activity for local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments. Beyond its economic benefits, the project will provide safe, modern recreational space that promotes youth development, wellness, and positive community interaction—outcomes that deliver lasting public value.

Providing a tax exemption for this project would help ensure its financial sustainability during the critical early years of operation, allowing resources to be directed toward programming, facility maintenance, and expanded access for residents, schools, and community organizations. Investments that strengthen community infrastructure and expand opportunities for young people and families yield returns that extend well beyond immediate fiscal considerations.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage a favorable report of the requested tax exemption and refund of past year property tax for the Hagerstown Fieldhouse and the Hagerstown Multi-Use Sports and Event Facility. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to projects that enhance the quality of life and economic strength of our region.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Scott A. Nicewarner in cursive script.

City Administrator, City of Hagerstown