



February 16, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
251 Taylor House Office Building, Annapolis, MD 21401

**Support for HB0654**  
**Natural Resources – Maryland Heritage Areas Authority – Funding and Grants**  
**FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Korman,

On behalf of Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc., a nonprofit organization in Prince George's County, I am writing in full support of HB0654 (SB0638) that will allow for lifting the cap on funding for the popular and impactful Maryland Heritage Areas Program.

Each year this grant program receives eligible applications roughly twice the available funds stalling exciting cultural tourism, trail enhancement, and community development projects. Thus, the State is leaving the documented \$7 return for every \$1 of state funding invested in the heritage area program on the table and out of the budget.

This simple legislation would allow the Maryland Heritage Areas Program to receive up to \$12M annually, lifting the current cap of \$6 million. The majority of funds (\$5.1M currently) are awarded as grants, distributing the impact across Maryland via our heritage area system. Moreover, the legislation does not guarantee funding but allows for the program to receive a greater share of Program Open Space funding from the state's transfer tax, if and when it should become available. Our potential grantees will be ready and the impact will be big.

In Prince George's County, where my non-profit organization serves out its mission to protect, preserve, and enhance historic, cultural, and natural assets, our grantees have renovated historic buildings into visitor centers, connected and enhanced trails for commuters and visitors, and promoted our Main Street restaurants, galleries, and shops through tourism.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meg Baco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Meagan Baco, Executive Director, Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc.  
4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, MD 20781