



BILL: SB 199

POSITION: FAV - Favorable

COMMITTEE: Finance

DATE: January 26, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Maryland Department of Disabilities
217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Chair Beidle,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support for **SB 199, Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund – Eligible Companions**. SB 199 would expand the reach and effectiveness of the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund (“the Boating Fund”).

The Boating Fund was originally established in MDOD by the General Assembly in 2024. The purpose of the Boating Fund is to award grant funds to eligible non-profit organizations that provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans to participate in activities such as boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, or surfing. SB 199 would expand the statutory language to ensure that individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans can include their “eligible companions” (defined as “an accompanying family member or direct support professional”) in these activities.

MDOD believes this amendment will not have a fiscal or operational impact on the Boating Fund. Further, this expansion may remove a potential barrier to participation, as some individuals cannot safely or comfortably engage in recreational activities without the direct assistance of a trusted family member or support person

For these reasons, MDOD respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 199.

Sincerely,

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

Carol A. Beatty
Secretary, Department of Disabilities