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January 25, 2026

Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Allegany Museum strongly supports SB300: Economic Development - Rural Readiness Program and Rural Maryland Capacity Building Fund – Establishment. The establishment of a Rural Readiness Program to provide assistance to rural communities to enhance their capacity for economic development, is a great idea.

Allegany Museum is helping promote Maryland as a destination for heritage tourism. Currently, over 60 percent of our visitors are from out of State. Tourism gives the area an essential economic boost and creates pride in the region's history. One of every ten jobs in Allegany County is now related to our tourist industry. Allegany Museum is also integral to the Cumberland Arts and Entertainment District. We currently are the second poorest county in the state so many of our local visitors are below the poverty level. Over 65% of the children in our county's school are eligible for USDA free school lunch reimbursement. A couple of the schools we host are at the 100% level. We believe heritage tourism can play a vital role in revitalization of our community.

Each year the Museum barely covers operating expenses. We are a volunteer non-profit organization. The proposed legislation would give the Museum some much needed financial support. We appreciate your continued support in empowering local tourism organizations in their quest to make Maryland a top tourist destination.

Sincerely,



Victor Rezendes
Vice President Adm.