

March 3, 2026

**TO:** Members of the Ways and Means Committee  
**FROM:** Mac Campbell, CVE, Executive Director, Baltimore Convention Center  
**RE:** House Bill 1580 – Economic Development – MD Enhanced Tax Increment Financing  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT

Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of HB 1580, legislation authorizing the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) to issue bonds to support enhanced Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts — including transformative projects exceeding \$500 million such as the modernization of the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC).

A 2012 Maryland Stadium Authority report found that over a three-year period the BCC generated more than \$307 million in direct spending, supported over 5,100 jobs, and produced \$41.5 million in annual state and local tax revenue — demonstrating a clear positive return on public investment. On average, the State’s return on its annual operating support has historically been approximately 4:1. Few public investments deliver that level of performance.

In recent years, however, while the center continues to draw 400,000–500,000 visitors annually and generate substantial economic activity, its return relative to public support has declined — in some years to as low as 1.2:1. This softening is not due to Baltimore lacking the assets to be a premier convention city. Our history, location, industry leading intellectual capital and hospitality sectors remain strong.

Rather, the convention industry has grown far more competitive. In the last decade alone, at least 13 cities have built new convention centers, expanded or modernized existing facilities, and/or added headquarters hotels — increasing exhibit space and delivering the modern amenities national planners now expect.

The Baltimore Convention Center, by contrast, has not undergone a significant renovation since 1997 and has received roughly 90% less annual capital funding than comparable markets. That disparity contributed to approximately \$150 million that I inherited when I became Executive Director in 2023. Without meaningful reinvestment, Baltimore risks losing business simply because it cannot meet today’s marketplace standards.

HB 1580 provides a critical financing tool — enhanced TIF authority through MEDCO — enabling the State to leverage private capital and deliver the long-planned modernization of the Convention Center and surrounding development. This is not about maintaining the status quo; it is about reclaiming market share, expanding economic impact, strengthening the tax base, and positioning Maryland for long-term growth.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1580. Thank you for your consideration.

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Sincerely,



Mac Campbell, CVE  
Executive Director

