



**HIPPODROME
THEATRE** *at the*
FRANCE-MERRICK
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

March 23, 2026

Dear Honorable Jheanelle Wilkins, Chair, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 440 and the renewal of the Maryland Theatrical Production Tax Credit. This program has already demonstrated clear, measurable benefits for Baltimore, Maryland's workforce, and the national theatrical industry, and its continuation is critical to sustaining that momentum.

Since the implementation of the tax credit, Maryland has become a premier launch location for major theatrical productions. Recent launches have included the return of *The Phantom of the Opera* to the United States—bringing Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and Sir Cameron Mackintosh to Baltimore—the pre-Broadway launch of *The Wiz*, which first premiered in Baltimore in 1974, and the national tour launches of the *& Juliet*, *Annie*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Life of Pi*, and *Water for Elephants*. Three additional tours already scheduled for the 2026–2027 season with more anticipated beyond that. These productions would not have launched in Maryland without this program.

The economic impact has been significant and direct. To date, these productions have generated:

\$2.2 million in gross pre-tax wages
\$634,000 in union benefits
\$250,000 in employer-paid payroll taxes

Looking ahead, currently scheduled productions are expected to generate an additional:

\$866,000 in gross pre-tax wages
\$263,000 in benefits
\$100,000 in employer-paid payroll taxes

These earnings extend well beyond the theatre. Workers spend their income locally on housing, food, transportation, healthcare, and other essential goods and services, creating meaningful downstream economic activity throughout the region.

Just as importantly, this program has positioned Baltimore as a nationally recognized starting point for Broadway tours. Producers, general managers, and touring companies consistently report positive experiences here, and there is growing enthusiasm across the industry for launching productions in Maryland. This reputation strengthens the state's cultural profile and attracts world-class talent and investment.

The benefits also reach Maryland residents directly. Local audiences gain early access to major productions, and hundreds of students are invited to attend dress rehearsals at no cost—often their first exposure to live theatre—helping to inspire the next generation of artists and audiences.



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The Maryland Theatrical Production Tax Credit is a proven, high-return investment. It creates jobs, supports organized labor, generates tax revenue, and elevates Maryland's standing in a competitive national industry.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 440 and ensure the continuation of this successful program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Chris Mahan
Vice President
France-Merrick Performing Arts Center