



Office of Tourism & Economic Development
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February 17, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

On behalf of the Worcester County Office of Tourism & Economic Development, I respectfully request a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 690. Worcester County's economy is uniquely structured. Nearly half of our operating budget is driven by visitor spending, yet our year-round population of 54,000 must maintain infrastructure that supports more than eight million visitors annually.

In that context, Maryland's 8.25 percent corporate income tax rate is a competitive liability. We compete directly with Virginia, Delaware, and North Carolina for hospitality investment, advanced manufacturing, and tourism-related service firms. Capital tied to hotels, sports facilities, restaurants, and reservation platforms is highly mobile. Rate differentials influence where companies locate payroll, book income, and deploy expansion dollars.

For Worcester County, capital investment means renovated hotel inventory, expanded conference and event capacity, and strengthened supply chains. Those projects generate construction jobs, permanent employment, higher assessed values, and increased local income tax revenue, without raising residential property taxes.

HB 690 provides a phased, predictable reduction that strengthens Maryland's competitive position while allowing revenue performance to be monitored through the normal budget process. Worcester County competes daily with other coastal markets for private-sector investment. A more competitive corporate rate is a direct signal that Maryland intends to attract and retain the capital that sustains jobs, tourism infrastructure, and long-term economic growth. For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 690.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Melanie Pursel". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Melanie Pursel, Director