



**LETTER OF SUPPORT ON BEHALF OF
MARYLAND TOURISM COALITION**

IN SUPPORT OF HB0012 – Alcoholic Beverages – Sale or Delivery for Off-Premise Consumption

Before the Economic Matters Committee, February 19, 2021

Dear Chairman & Committee Members,

My name is Ruth Toomey, Executive Director of Maryland Tourism Coalition, a 50-year-old organization that represents the various services, attractions, organizations and accommodations that make up the State's Industry. MTC is the voice of our state's diverse tour and travel community, bringing together the entire industry to enhance business growth and to promote Maryland as a first-class destination for visitors. On behalf of our 1,000+ members, I would like to express our support of HB0012.

Tourism is vital to Maryland's economy! In a typical year, tourism supports 226,000 direct and indirect jobs, making it the 11th largest industry in the state. Visitors to Maryland spend nearly \$18.6 billion in Maryland each year and those same visitors generate close to \$2.6 billion in state and local taxes. Without tourism in the state of Maryland, each household would pay \$1,175 more in local taxes.

But as we all know, this past year has been anything but typical. Our industry was among the hardest hit due to the pandemic. Many of our members have been forced to close and some are even now unable to reopen. 95% of all tourism businesses are small businesses and many are hanging on by a thread. The sale or delivery for off-premise consumption has become a necessary tool for our Maryland restaurants, taverns, and bars. During the pandemic the comptroller made executive orders that allowed for these businesses to start selling alcohol to go along with food orders. This has helped many small restaurants and bars keep their doors open during this devastating pandemic. And while the pandemic will eventually get better, these restaurants will not be in the clear for a long time – it will take time for consumers to resume "normal" daily activity and many businesses will have lost a year or more in profits. This act will allow restaurants and bars to continue a service that many consumers have now come to expect – we should continue to support our small businesses for years to come by passing this bill.

On behalf of the Maryland Tourism Coalition, we respectfully request that you support HB0012.

Sincerely,

Ruth Toomey

Ruth Toomey
MTC Executive Director