



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

**IN SUPPORT OF HB1232 – Alcoholic Beverages - Manufacturer's Licenses and Off-Site
Permits**

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 HB1232.

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 has been devastated by the pandemic forcing many small businesses to close temporarily and in worst cases, permanently. Many of our members are creatively coming up with ways to keep their business alive and their employees employed. We need to do whatever we can to assist this tourism industry – breweries, wineries, and distilleries – as much as possible as they will be at the forefront of bringing our Maryland economy back to life. This legislation was initiated by Maryland Wineries Association, Brewers Association of Maryland and Maryland Distillers Guild to codify the changes made during the pandemic via executive order and administrative waiver. These include the ability for manufacturers to sell and deliver products directly to customers, ship products via common carrier (FedEx, UPS), removes sales caps for breweries and distilleries, and enables flexibility in fees assessed for manufacturer licenses. These changes that have been temporarily approved in a state of emergency, have proven to be a lifeline for many of these small businesses. As tourism rebounds back to life, Maryland needs to support these industries to keep jobs here in the state, encourage visitors from neighboring areas, and to stay competitive within the industry.

On behalf of the Maryland Tourism Coalition, we respectfully request that you support HB1232.

Sincerely,

Ruth Toomey

Ruth Toomey
Executive Director MTC