

HB602 Sotterley Plantation - Operating Grant.docx.

Uploaded by: Brian Crosby

Position: FAV

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Legislative District 29B
St. Mary's County

Vice Chair
Economic Matters Committee



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HB602 - Board of Public Works - Sotterley Plantation - Operating Grant

Good afternoon Mr. Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee. For the record, Vice Chair Brian Crosby presenting HB602 - Board of Public Works - Sotterley Plantation - Operating Grant.

This bill will provide a total of \$1.125 million in funding for Historic Sotterley from FY24 to FY26. Historic Sotterley is a UNESCO Site of Memory and a National Historic Landmark dedicated to telling the whole story of Sotterley. Through the work of descendants of the enslaved, the owners, and laborers, Historic Sotterley has been bringing the community together to foster a healing and understanding dialogue about all parts of their legacy, including slavery. Historic Sotterley has been dedicated to this holistic teaching for more than two decades – longer than most sites in the nation. Historic Sotterley is a model for other historical sites around the nation for conversations about equity.

Historic Sotterley has 94 acres of land and over 20 historic buildings in need of maintenance and infrastructure improvements to ensure its preservation for generations to come. Two of the biggest restorations will be the Manor House and the Slave Cabin along with new restrooms, collections storage, and improvements addressing enhanced safety and efficiency.

Historic Sotterley is working with MSDE to provide educational programs and expand their curriculum to include environmental programs. Sotterley is also seeking to expand its Common Ground Initiative which brings together descendants and our community to provide education, resources, remembrance, and to aid in healing, through the interpretation of authentic history.

This is an important community resource for education, remembrance, and volunteerism. Historic Sotterley is the standard in holistic education that teaches all aspects of our shared history. For all these reasons, I ask the committee for a favorable report.

Historic Sotterley- Nancy Easterling HB 602 Testim

Uploaded by: Nancy Easterling

Position: FAV

Testimony for HB 602—Operational Funding for Historic Sotterley, Inc.

I am Nancy Easterling, the Executive Director for Historic Sotterley, Inc., located in St. Mary's County, Maryland: a 300 year old National Historic Landmark and UNESCO Site of Memory for the Slave Route Project which interprets our complex, and often difficult, shared history. It offers a full range of programming to include education programs and field trips, tours, cultural events, recreational opportunities, a working farm that donates produce to our local community, our Common Ground Initiative supported by our over 200 self-identified Descendants, and so much more. Historic Sotterley is truly an exceptional educational and cultural resource for our community, our State, and our Nation.

I am writing to respectfully request that the Committee look favorably upon the amended HB 602, and approve the generous support it will offer to Historic Sotterley in future years. While Sotterley has never wavered in its dedication to improving how we serve our community and to advancing Sotterley's stories and mission, it has often been a challenge to do so. Historic Sotterley operates without an endowment, does not have governmental support outside of the grants it receives, and has to earn and raise the majority of its budget every year. Sotterley has long been dependent upon special events and earned income, and even without a pandemic, this has been a difficult way to support and advance its mission.

I would also like to take the opportunity to more clearly answer questions that came from the Committee regarding how the funds from this bill would be used. The generous funds from HB 602 would provide the operational support needed to fund the nonprofit and its mission. Historic Sotterley runs a 94 acre site, a working farm, and an ever-expanding variety of programs, events, and initiatives, and the funds from this bill would be used to offset its many operational costs to include site maintenance. This precious breathing room would free the staff from spending the vast majority of its time chasing every dollar needed to support its day-to-day operations, thus also giving staff the ability to focus more of its time and energies on expanding its mission as well as acquiring the financial support necessary for many capital needs and infrastructure improvements. This bill would not fund capital improvements, but would finally allow staff members the bandwidth to seek out critical funding necessary to make more capital projects a reality.

As one more point of clarification, the bill refers to Sotterley by its colloquial historic name, Sotterley Plantation, but to clear up any possible confusion, the site and the organization are actually legally known as Historic Sotterley. If this technical name change is deemed necessary and is possible to execute, it would of course be appreciated.

Historic Sotterley is like no other historic site in Maryland or truly anywhere in this nation, and it is an invaluable and irreplaceable resource. The incredible support from HB 602 will give Sotterley the ability to expand its important mission by offering the operational support it so desperately needs. The State of Maryland's investment in this bill be an investment in Sotterley's work - promoting an understanding of the realities of our shared history in order to create a better future together, and never wavering in our commitment to bettering the lives of our citizens. We are profoundly grateful for the generous support of the State of Maryland, and ask that you vote favorably regarding HB 602.

103 HB 602 CSMC signed.pdf

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ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President
Eric Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

House Bill 602
Board of Public Works – Sotterley Plantation – Operating Grant

SUPPORT

March 15, 2022

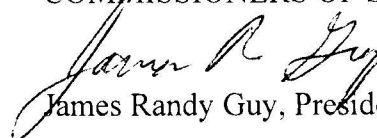
The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman
Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Guzzone:

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County **SUPPORT** HB 602 – Board of Public Works – Sotterley Plantation – Operating Grant which will be heard in the Budget and Taxation Committee.

We support HB 602 and request a favorable report. We appreciate the introduction of this legislation and believe this legislation will benefit the citizens of St. Mary's County. We look forward to working with you on this and other initiatives throughout the session.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


James Randy Guy, President

CSMC/AB/sf
T:/Consent/2022/103

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey
Delegate Matthew Morgan
Delegate Gerald Clark
Delegate Brian Crosby
Commissioner Eric Colvin
Commissioner Michael Hewitt
Commissioner Todd Morgan
Commissioner John O'Connor
David Weiskopf, Interim County Administrator
John S. Houser, Assistant County Attorney