



Maryland Soccer Foundation

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April 5, 2022

House Bill 896

Maryland Stadium Authority - Increase of Bond Authorization - Camden Yards

House Bill 896

Maryland Stadium Authority – Sports and Entertainment Facilities Act of 2022

Written Testimony: Support

Senators Guzzone and Rosapepe and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

My name is Matt Libber, and I am the Executive Director of the Maryland SoccerPlex and Adventist HealthCare Fieldhouse in Montgomery County. I am also currently the Chair of TEAM Maryland, the sports marketing collective of the Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) within Maryland, as well as serve on the Board of Directors for the Sports Events and Tourism Association (SportsETA), the trade group for sports tourism organizations. Wearing all three of these hats provides great perspective on the impact that House Bills 896 and 897 would have on the economy of Maryland, and we urge you to support both House Bill 896 and 897, as amended.

Tourism is a major part of the Maryland Economy and affects every part of the State, from the mountains of Garrett County, to the I-95 Corridor, and to the communities on the Eastern Shore and Ocean City. Sports tourism is major component of the tourism industry. In the post-COVID recovery, sport tourism was the first industry to return, which, in turn, touches so many other businesses in the hospitality and retail sectors. Sports travelers, event organizers, and venues spent \$45.1 billion in 2019, which generated \$103.3 billion in business sales when including indirect and induced impacts, according to a 2020 report from Tourism Economics. In Maryland, youth and amateur sports generates over \$225 million in direct spending for our economy. Investments by the State in sports tourism pays itself through the economic impact and development around sports events. For every \$1.00 spent on tourism advertising \$31.00 flows back into the State Economy. The funding for major events in this bill is important for Maryland to stay on top of an extremely competitive market. Cities and states around the United States have seen the importance of sports tourism and the economic benefits that come with these types of events. Providing the Maryland Sports Commission with the resources to attract major events such as the FIFA World Cup, Army – Navy Game, America's Cup racing, and Major League Baseball's All-Star Game sets us apart from other destinations. These marque events themselves turn into promotional assets showcasing Maryland to the rest of the country and the world.

This pair of bills allow Maryland to remain at the forefront of a highly competitive market. Allowing the Stadium Authority to make additional investments in our professional stadiums help showcase the State to the larger sports market. Providing funding for investment in the creation of new sports venue assets, improvements to existing assets, and attracting new events to the State will provide our communities across the State to continue the work they have already done to bring world class sporting events to Maryland.



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On behalf of the Maryland Soccer Foundation and TEAM Maryland, I ask that you support these two important pieces of legislation. Investments like this provide both short-term and long-term benefits to the State economy. Sports tourism has proven time and again to be one of the strongest sectors of the tourism economy of this State. Sports tourism touches so many sectors of the economy its benefits will be felt throughout the State for years to come. Thank you for your consideration and support for sports tourism in Maryland.

Respectfully,

Matthew Libber

Executive Director

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