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January 18, 2024

Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: SB 14 – Economic Development – Tourism Zones – Designation and Benefits

Position: Support

Reason for Position:

The City of Mount Rainier wholeheartedly supports Senate Bill 14. We firmly believe that this legislation, once enacted, will not only foster economic growth and job creation in our city and the state of Maryland but will also serve as a catalyst for enhancing our unique communities.

The provision in Senate Bill 14 that authorizes municipalities to establish tourism zones aligns perfectly with Mount Rainier's vision. Nestled in our city are several cultural and historical treasures, making it an ideal destination for tourists seeking enriching experiences. Our support for this legislation is grounded in the belief that the structured approach it provides will be a boon for the economic and cultural landscape of Mount Rainier and cities and towns across Maryland.

The authorization to establish tourism zones opens up avenues for strategic planning and development. The City of Mount Rainier, along with cities in Route 1, Port Towns, and Prince George's County, boasts historical significance, with landmarks like Potts Hall Welcome Center and Bladensburg Port, to name a few. These attractions, when designated within a tourism zone, can draw visitors, subsequently boosting economic activity for local businesses.

The proposed local incentives, including Real Property Tax Credits, Personal Property Tax Credits, and Exemption from Admissions & Amusement Tax, offer tangible support for local businesses and the community. As a result, small enterprises in Mount Rainier can thrive, leading to increased employment opportunities and overall community prosperity.

We all can agree that Maryland is a beautiful state, from the mountains and beaches to historical sites found in the smallest villages and the largest cities. SB14 would give us the opportunity to showcase Maryland even more as a destination, increasing the quality of life for our residents by creating growth in the economy—a win for all.

For these reasons, the City of Mount Rainier respectfully requests that this committee provide Senate Bill 14 with a favorable report. We believe in the positive impact this legislation can have on our local economy, job market, and overall community well-being, positively impacting Maryland. Your support for Senate Bill 14 is crucial in advancing the economic development goals of municipalities across the state.

Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 or via email MayorBenitez@MountRainierMD.org

Sincerely,

Celina R. Benitez

Mayor Celina Benitez, City of Mount Rainier