



2026 Maryland General Assembly Recap

Overview

The Maryland General Assembly completed its 90-day session at 11:59 PM on April 13, 2025. Once again there were hundreds of bills that never made it to end when the clock ran out. There were also some fireworks in the last minutes with chaos in the house and an unusual encounter in the Senate which is typically much more civil. With this being an election year there were less controversial bills in the State House with the exception of the redistricting effort that failed to move in the Senate, as Senate President Ferguson indicated before the session. The House saw a new speaker take over leadership of the lower chamber.

The legislature went into the session knowing they had to close a \$1.5B budget deficit, leaving the theme of the session was cutting spending, at least in theory. The budget passed relatively easily with little fanfare, mainly due to there being no increase in taxes, something that neither party wants in an election year. Budget issues will be carried forward for several years due to a lagging economy and structural deficits in the States which still have not been addressed.

Bill Review

MTC tracked 50 total bills related to tourism issues. MTC submitted written testimony 26 times and in-person testimony 12 times. As we have the last few years, MTC continues to increase its profile across the State and especially in Annapolis. Ruth and Matt, though Frank Boston, secured meetings with leadership in the State House including the Chief of Staff for both the Senate President and the Speaker of the House. We also met with staff from Sen Guzzone, Chair of Budget and Taxation, and Del. Barnes and Kaiser, Chair and Vice Chair of Appropriations. This is also evident in the attendance of elected officials and cabinet members during tourism day. Ruth and Matt also attended more than 20 legislative events in Annapolis and across the state.



Report on 2026 Maryland Legislative Bills Being Tracked

HB0020 – Baltimore City - Alcoholic Beverages - Related Event Promoter's Permit

Status: Approved by the Governor - Chapter 74

MTC Position: Support

This bill creates an event promoter's alcoholic beverage permit in Baltimore City. It allows qualified event promoters to obtain authorization to sell alcoholic beverages in connection with approved events, subject to local licensing conditions, event-specific approvals, and compliance with existing alcohol control rules. In practice, it would add a new permit tool for temporary events rather than requiring promoters to fit within existing license categories. This bill is specific to the CIAA Tournament.

HB0077 – Consumer Protection - Sale and Resale of Event Tickets - Registration and Regulation

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Informational Letter

If passed, this bill would regulate the resale of event tickets by placing restrictions on resale practices and requiring registration and oversight of sellers or platforms involved in ticket resales. It would likely impose consumer protection standards around disclosure, pricing, and business conduct, with the goal of reducing abusive resale practices and improving transparency for ticket buyers.

HB0079 – Climate Solutions Affordability Act of 2026

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support w/ Amedments

If enacted, this bill would amend the Climate Solutions Act of 2022 to require that changes or compliance measures be economically feasible. The practical effect would be to add an affordability or feasibility standard to state climate implementation, potentially slowing, narrowing, or conditioning mandates if they are found to impose costs viewed as unreasonable or impractical.



HB0188 – Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2026

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would revise how unemployment insurance is calculated in Maryland. That likely means changes to benefit formulas, employer contribution calculations, or wage base assumptions used in the unemployment system. The bill appears intended to modernize the structure of the program rather than simply make a one-time rate adjustment.

HB0191 – Consumer Protection - Retail Transactions - Cash Payments

Status: Passed Enrolled

MTC Position: Oppose

This bill prohibits businesses from refusing cash payments in covered retail transactions. It would require at least some businesses to continue accepting physical currency from customers, which would preserve cash as a legally usable payment method and limit the spread of cashless-only business models. The bill was amended to apply only to essential goods and services, including food, beverages, personal hygiene products, health products and fuel. The law does not apply to food service meant for on premise consumption, online sales, vending machines, and a few other exceptions.

HB0201 – Income Tax - Tips or Gratuities - Subtraction Modification (No Income Taxes on Tips Act)

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would allow certain hospitality workers to subtract tips or gratuities from taxable income when filing Maryland income taxes. The bill would reduce state income tax liability for eligible workers and treat tipped income more favorably under state tax law, likely subject to definitions of who qualifies and what income counts as tips.



HB0238 – Maryland Heritage Area Authority and Heritage Areas - Alterations

Status: Approved by the Governor - Chapter 123

MTC Position: Monitor

This bill would alter the voting membership of the Maryland Heritage Area Authority and change how grants are distributed. In substance, it would reshape governance of the authority and revise the rules or structure used to allocate funding within the heritage area program, affecting who has decision-making power and how resources are awarded.

HB0272 – Food Establishments - Lavatory Requirement and On-Farm Food Service Facility License

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Monitor

This bill would reduce regulations affecting on-farm food service for agritourism uses. It would likely relax lavatory requirements or create a more tailored licensing structure for farms offering food service, making it easier for agricultural properties to host food-related visitor activities without having to meet the same rules as a more traditional food establishment.

HB0390 – Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2027)

Status: First Reading Appropriations

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this would serve as the annual budget bill for Fiscal Year 2027. It would authorize state spending across agencies, programs, and priorities for the fiscal year, setting appropriations levels and formalizing the financial plan for Maryland government operations.

HB0506 – Economic Development - Transformational Project Financing Program - Establishment

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would establish a transformational project financing program and change how property taxes are distributed in a state-supported development zone. Based on the notes, it would affect areas such as Main Street districts, Arts and Entertainment districts, and enterprise zones. The bill appears designed to redirect or structure tax revenues in a way that helps finance major development efforts in targeted areas.



HB0654 – Natural Resources - Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - Funding and Grants

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Support

This bill would update the funding and grant structure for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. It would likely revise eligibility, distribution formulas, administrative processes, or funding priorities, making changes to how heritage area grants are funded and awarded.

HB0898 – Economic Development - Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADE) Act

Status: Passed.

MTC Position: Support with Amendments

This bill would overhaul Maryland's economic development strategy. It likely would restructure planning, incentives, priorities, or administrative tools used by the state to support business attraction, retention, and development, creating a broader framework for economic competitiveness policy.

HB0916 – Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Oppose

If enacted, this bill would add a hotel tax to pay for transportation projects in connection with regional transportation authorities. The bill would create or expand a revenue source tied to lodging activity and direct those funds toward transportation-related uses, linking accommodations taxation to infrastructure or transit financing.

HB0988 – Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards - Repeal

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would repeal Maryland's Building Energy Performance Standards requirements. The practical effect would be to eliminate the state's existing BEPS compliance framework for covered properties, ending or reversing mandates related to building energy performance targets and associated reporting or enforcement obligations.



HB0993 – Real Property - Short-Term Rentals

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this bill would prohibit local jurisdictions from limiting the ability of property owners or lessees to use property for short-term rentals. It would significantly constrain local regulatory authority over short-term rental activity and could preempt local rules that restrict or ban such uses.

HB1078 – Economic Development - Maryland Stadium Authority - Carroll Park Soccer Stadium and Facility

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would authorize the Maryland Stadium Authority to acquire land and build a new soccer stadium and related facility at Carroll Park in Baltimore. It would expand the authority's role into this project and provide a legal basis for land acquisition and facility development.

HB1193 – Department of Natural Resources - Savage Highlands State Park - Hotel Rental Surcharge

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If enacted, this bill would impose a hotel rental surcharge on rental units at Savage Highlands State Park. According to the tracking notes, a portion of the revenue would be directed back to tourism promotion. The bill would therefore create a park-specific lodging surcharge and earmark at least part of the proceeds for promotional purposes.

HB1203 – Garrett County - Alcoholic Beverages Act of 2026

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would modify alcoholic beverage permit rules in Garrett County for wineries, caterers, breweries, and similar businesses. It would likely adjust local license categories, privileges, service permissions, or operating requirements to better fit the county's current beverage and hospitality market.



HB1217 – Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards and Energy Use Intensity Targets - Exemptions

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If enacted, this bill would exempt buildings constructed before October 1, 2022 from having to replace equipment before the end of its normal life cycle in order to comply with BEPS or related energy use targets. It would soften compliance obligations for older buildings by allowing owners to wait until normal replacement time instead of forcing early upgrades.

HB1255 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Opposed

If passed, this bill would authorize a referendum on internet gaming. Rather than directly legalizing online gaming by itself, it would send the question to voters, creating the legal mechanism for a statewide vote on whether Maryland should expand commercial gaming to include internet-based play.

HB1303 – Alcoholic Beverages - Class A License - Retail Establishments (Alcoholic Beverages Modernization Act of 2026)

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this bill would allow retail establishments such as grocery stores, convenience stores, and gas stations to sell alcoholic beverages under a Class A framework. This would represent a major change to Maryland's retail alcohol distribution system by expanding the types of outlets eligible for off-premises alcohol sales.

HB1343 – Internet Gaming - Authorization and Implementation

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Opposed

If passed, this bill would provide the implementing framework for internet gaming if the referendum is approved. It would likely establish the regulatory structure, licensing rules, operational requirements, and state oversight needed to launch legal i-gaming in Maryland.



HB1473 – Economic Development - Maryland's Future Board - Establishment

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Informational Letter

If enacted, this bill would establish a Maryland's Future Board to provide a strategic plan for the state. The board would likely be charged with long-range planning and recommendations on growth, competitiveness, development priorities, or statewide economic direction.

HB1479 – Labor and Employment - Minimum Wage - Increase (Maryland Raise the Wage Act)

Status: Withdrawn

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would increase the Maryland minimum wage beginning in 2028. It would commit the state to a future wage floor increase, raising labor costs over time for covered employers while increasing minimum earnings for affected workers.

HB1552 – Alcoholic Beverages - Class L Beer, Wine, and Liquor License - Established

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this bill would create a Class L beer, wine, and liquor license allowing craft beverage venues to sell other Maryland craft beverages for on-site consumption. That would broaden what participating venues could offer and create a license category tailored to shared promotion or sale of in-state craft products.

HB1580 – Economic Development - Maryland Enhanced Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would allow MEDCO to issue bonds for tax increment financing districts. It would expand financing tools available for development projects by tying bond issuance to future tax increment revenues within designated districts.



HB1590 – Alcoholic Beverages - Class 8 Farm Brewery and Class 10 Farm Distillery Licenses

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this bill would create new alcohol permit classes for farm breweries and farm distilleries. It would formally recognize those business models in the licensing code and provide a dedicated regulatory structure for their operations.

SB0003 – Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act of 2026

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this Senate bill would make the same underlying changes as HB0188 by modifying how unemployment insurance is calculated in Maryland. It would update core formulas or methods used in the unemployment system and modernize program mechanics.

SB0017 – Baltimore City - Alcoholic Beverages - Related Event Promoter's Permit

Status: Approved by the Governor - Chapter 3

MTC Position: Support

If enacted, this bill would establish the Senate cross-file version of the Baltimore City event promoter's permit for alcoholic beverages. It would authorize promoters to secure a permit for alcohol sales tied to eligible events and create a local legal pathway for those activities.

SB0209 – Department of Natural Resources - Savage Highlands State Park - Hotel Rental Surcharge

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would add a hotel rental surcharge to rental units at Savage Highlands State Park, with some proceeds directed to tourism promotion. It would create a dedicated fee structure attached to lodging at that state park and allocate revenue for specified public purposes.



SB0226 – Maryland Heritage Area Authority and Heritage Areas - Alterations

Status: Approved by the Governor - Chapter 124

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this bill would alter the authority's voting membership and change heritage area grant distribution, paralleling HB0238. It would affect governance and how support is allocated within Maryland's heritage area framework.

SB0282 – Budget Bill

Status: Approved by the Governor - Chapter 4

MTC Position: Support Commerce Budget and MSA Budget

If passed, this would serve as the Senate budget vehicle for annual state appropriations. It would authorize expenditures and establish the state's operating budget for the fiscal period covered by the bill.

SB0388 – Economic Development - Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADE) Act

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Support with Amendments

If enacted, this bill would overhaul Maryland's economic development strategy through the Senate version of the DECADE Act. It would update the state's approach to competitiveness, development planning, and economic policy tools.

SB0455 – Economic Development - Transformational Project Financing Program - Establishment

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would establish the transformational project financing program and change property tax distribution in state-supported development zones. As noted in the spreadsheet, the impact would extend to Main Street, Arts and Entertainment, enterprise zones, and similar targeted development areas.



SB0479 – Environment - Building Energy Performance Standards and Energy Use Intensity Targets - Exemptions

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If enacted, this bill would exempt buildings built before October 1, 2022 from having to replace functioning equipment before normal end of life for BEPS compliance. It would reduce immediate retrofit pressure on older buildings and allow owners to phase in upgrades later.

SB0575 – Economic Development - Maryland Stadium Authority - Charles County Sports and Wellness Center

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would allow the Maryland Stadium Authority to acquire land and build the Charles County Sports and Wellness Center. It would authorize state-level involvement in developing that facility and expand the authority's project portfolio.

SB0638 – Natural Resources - Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - Funding and Grants

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Support

This bill would revise funding and grants for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. It would likely modernize funding mechanisms, clarify grant administration, and adjust how heritage area resources are awarded or managed.

SB0666 – Real Property - Short-Term Rentals

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would prohibit local jurisdictions from limiting owners' or lessees' use of property for short-term rentals, subject to whatever amendments were adopted. It would curtail local restrictions and move Maryland toward a stronger statewide framework protecting short-term rental use.



SB0674 – Transportation - Regional Transportation Authorities

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Oppose

If enacted, this bill would add a hotel tax to support transportation projects tied to regional transportation authorities. It would use lodging-related revenue as a funding stream for transportation purposes.

SB0718 – Frederick County - Alcoholic Beverages - Class L Permit

Status: Failed.

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would allow Frederick County craft beverage venues to sell other Maryland craft beverages for on-site consumption. It would expand what qualifying venues may offer and create more flexibility in how local craft producers and venues operate.

SB0761 – Expansion of Commercial Gaming - Internet Gaming Referendum

Status: Withdrawn

MTC Position: Oppose

If enacted, this bill would authorize a statewide referendum on internet gaming. Its role would be to place the issue before voters rather than directly implementing online gaming operations.

SB0770 – Economic Development - Maryland's Future Board - Establishment

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Informational Letter

If passed, this bill would establish a Maryland's Future Board tasked with providing a strategic plan for the state. It would create a formal body focused on long-term statewide planning and development strategy.



SB0802 – Garrett County - Alcoholic Beverages Act of 2026

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Monitor

This bill would modify local alcoholic beverage permit rules in Garrett County for wineries, caterers, breweries, and related businesses. It would update the county's beverage law framework to reflect current business and licensing needs.

SB0807 – Alcoholic Beverages - Class 8 Farm Brewery and Class 10 Farm Distillery Licenses

Status: Passed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would create a farm distillery license and, based on the title, also address the Class 8 farm brewery structure. It would establish or refine licensing categories specifically for farm-based alcoholic beverage producers and clarify their legal operating status.

SB0821 – Abandoned Sears Building - Acquisition by the Department of General Services

Status: Failed.

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this bill would allow the Department of General Services to acquire an abandoned property in Montgomery County. The spreadsheet notes that the site could potentially support an indoor sports tourism venue, so the bill would primarily authorize public acquisition of the property for future use or redevelopment.

SB0883 – Economic Development - Maryland Stadium Authority - Carroll Park Soccer Stadium and Facility

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Support

If passed, this bill would authorize the Maryland Stadium Authority to acquire land and build a new soccer stadium and related facility at Carroll Park in Baltimore. It would provide statutory authority for MSA participation in that project.



SB0884 – Internet Poker Authorization and Regulation Act of 2026

Status: Withdrawn

MTC Position: Oppose

If enacted, this bill would authorize internet poker in Maryland and create a regulatory structure for that activity. It would legalize and regulate online poker specifically, rather than internet gaming more broadly.

SB0885 – Internet Gaming and Online Bingo - Authorization and Implementation

Status: Failed.

MTC Position: Opposed

If passed, this bill would authorize and implement internet gaming and online bingo if the necessary legal approvals are obtained. It would likely establish licensing, regulation, compliance, and administrative systems for those online gaming products.

SB0945 – Admissions and Amusement Tax and Sales and Use Tax - University of Maryland, College Park Athletic Competitions and Game Day Surcharge

Status: Failed.

MTC Position: Monitor

If enacted, this bill would add an admissions and amusement tax or game day surcharge to University of Maryland athletic events. Based on the notes, bill text was not yet available, but the clear purpose is to impose an additional tax or surcharge tied to attendance at UMD athletic competitions.

SB0958 – Alcoholic Beverages - Class L Beer, Wine, and Liquor License Established

Status: Failed

MTC Position: Monitor

If passed, this bill would allow craft beverage venues to sell other Maryland craft beverages for on-site consumption through a Class L license structure. It would expand license privileges for participating venues and support broader onsite offerings of Maryland-produced beverages.