

Chapter 635

(Senate Bill 896)

AN ACT concerning

**Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority
Task Force**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force to study and make recommendations concerning the membership, purpose, and function of an ~~authority~~ entity or strategy to govern the renovation, revitalization, financing, and ongoing maintenance and management of a certain Baltimore Convention site and certain surrounding areas; and generally relating to the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force.

Preamble

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds that the general welfare of the people of Maryland is directly dependent on the continual encouragement, development, growth, and expansion of business, industry, commerce, and tourism within the State and, thus, the promotion, attraction, stimulation, development, and expansion of business, industry, commerce, and tourism in the State should be fostered; and

WHEREAS, The Baltimore Convention site, because of its size and location in a first-class city, is vital in attracting business, industry, commerce, and tourism to Baltimore City, the surrounding counties, and the State as a whole; and

WHEREAS, To redevelop, revitalize, and promote the Baltimore Convention site within this State, the Baltimore Convention Center commissioned an independent study of convention and visitor industry governance models, day-to-day management approaches, and funding models prevalent nationally and approaches that would be appropriate for the future success of the Baltimore Convention Center; and

WHEREAS, An important aspect of the redevelopment and successful continuation of the Baltimore Convention Center should be a holistic evaluation of the immediate surrounding area and the identification of underutilized State and local real property assets, ~~including the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel~~; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds, for the benefit of the people of the State, it is necessary to provide additional and flexible means of governing, redeveloping, revitalizing, constructing, designing, managing, financing, operating, and promoting the Baltimore Convention site and the immediate surrounding area; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) In this section, “Baltimore Convention site” has the meaning stated in § 10–601 of the Economic Development Article.

(b) There is a Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force.

(c) The Task Force consists of the following members:

(1) the Mayor of Baltimore City, or the Mayor’s designee;

(2) one member of the Senate of Maryland who is a member of the Baltimore City Delegation, appointed by the President of the Senate;

(3) one member of the House of Delegates who is a member of the Baltimore City Delegation, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(4) the Secretary of Commerce, or the Secretary’s designee;

(5) the Administrator of the Maryland Transit Administration, or the Administrator’s designee;

(6) the Chair of the Maryland Tourism Development Board, or the Chair’s designee;

(7) the Chair of the Maryland Stadium Authority, or the Chair’s designee;

~~(6)~~ (8) the Chair of the Maryland Economic Development Corporation, or the Chair’s designee;

~~(7)~~ (9) the Executive Director of the Baltimore Convention Center;

~~(8)~~ (10) the Chair of the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Board;

~~(9)~~ (11) the President and Chief Executive Officer of Visit Baltimore;

~~(10)~~ (12) the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Baltimore Development Corporation;

~~(11)~~ (13) the President of the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore;

~~(12)~~ (14) the Executive Director of the Maryland Tourism Coalition;

~~(13)~~ (15) a representative from the restaurant industry in Baltimore City, appointed by the Restaurant Association of Maryland;

~~(14)~~ (16) a representative of the hotel industry in Baltimore City, appointed by the Maryland Hotel Lodging Association; ~~and~~

(17) a representative of the Greater Baltimore Committee, appointed by the Greater Baltimore Committee; and

~~(15)~~ (18) a representative of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 3, appointed by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 3;

(19) a representative of UNITE HERE Local 7, appointed by UNITE HERE Local 7; and

(20) the following members appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore City:

(i) a representative of the African American business community within a 0.5-mile radius of the Baltimore Convention site;

(ii) a representative from ~~a~~ an African American-owned development entity with significant financial investment in property within a 0.5-mile radius of the Baltimore Convention site; and

(iii) a resident who lives within a 0.5-mile radius of the Baltimore Convention site.

(d) The Chair of the Baltimore Convention and Tourism Board shall serve as the chair of the Task Force.

(e) The Department of Commerce shall provide staff for the Task Force.

(f) A member of the Task Force:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(g) The Task Force shall:

(1) study the establishment of ~~a Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority~~ an entity or strategy to govern and redevelop, revitalize, construct, design, manage, finance, and operate certain State and local real property assets while promoting the Baltimore Convention site and the immediate surrounding area; and

(2) make recommendations on:

- (i) the membership of ~~the Authority~~ any recommended entity;
- (ii) the ~~Authority's~~ purpose and function of any recommended entity, including its ability to:
 - 1. acquire by purchase, gift, or devise any property, franchises, and other interests in the Baltimore Convention site and any offices, parking lots or garages, access roads, hotels, restaurants, railroad sidings, and other structures, improvements, equipment, furnishings, or other property functionally related to and located in the immediate surrounding area of the Baltimore Convention site, ~~including the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel~~, and take title to the property in the name of the ~~Authority~~ recommended entity or its designated agent;
 - 2. determine the character of any renovation, revitalization, or development projects relating to the Baltimore Convention site and the immediate surrounding area, excluding Areas 13, 14, and 15A as designated by the City of Baltimore Inner Harbor Project I Urban Renewal Plan;
 - 3. enter into any agreements, leases, partnerships, or contracts necessary to renovate, revitalize, maintain, and manage the Baltimore Convention site or any other State or local real property assets identified by the Task Force;
 - 4. fix and collect rates, rentals, fees, and charges for services required to successfully operate the Baltimore Convention site or any other State or local real property assets;
 - 5. establish rules and regulations for the use of the Baltimore Convention site or any other State or local real property assets; and
 - 6. issue bonds for renovation, revitalization, and ongoing maintenance and management of the Baltimore Convention site or any other State or local real property assets identified by the Task Force, including operating expenses; and
- (iii) any other matter the Task Force deems necessary for the establishment and implementation of an effective ~~Authority~~ entity or strategy.
- (h) In conducting its study and making recommendations in accordance with subsection (g) of this section, the Task Force shall consider the findings and recommendations in the Baltimore Convention Industry Benchmark Study previously commissioned by the Baltimore Convention Center.
- (i) The Task Force shall consider and make recommendations of at least one option that does not include a public-private partnership, and that is not the status quo.

(i) On or before December 1, 2024, the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Mayor of Baltimore City, the Governor, and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30, 2025, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 9, 2024.