

HOUSE BILL 1032

R1

4lr3048
CF 4lr3049

By: **Delegate Solomon**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2024

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Highways – Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program; requiring
4 the State Highway Administration, in collaboration with the Department of
5 Commerce, to administer the Program and establish an Eligibility Committee to
6 review attraction applications; requiring the Administration to notify certain
7 committees of the General Assembly if the Program is amended; and generally
8 relating to the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage Program.

9 BY adding to
10 Article – Transportation
11 Section 8–755 to be under the new part “Part VIII. Tourist Area and Corridor
12 Signage Program”
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Transportation**

18 **8–753. RESERVED.**

19 **8–754. RESERVED.**

20 **PART VIII. TOURIST AREA AND CORRIDOR SIGNAGE PROGRAM.**

21 **8–755.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "PROGRAM" MEANS THE TOURIST AREA AND
2 CORRIDOR SIGNAGE PROGRAM.

3 (B) THERE IS A TOURIST AREA AND CORRIDOR SIGNAGE PROGRAM.

4 (C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO CREATE A SYSTEM OF
5 SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE SIGNS TO DIRECT MOTORISTS TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL
6 ATTRACTIONS BY DIRECTING THE MOTORISTS FIRST TO GROUPS OF ATTRACTIONS.

7 (D) THE ADMINISTRATION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT
8 OF COMMERCE, SHALL:

9 (1) ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; AND

10 (2) ESTABLISH AN ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE TO REVIEW ATTRACTION
11 APPLICATIONS.

12 (E) (1) (I) THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE SHALL DEVELOP
13 STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING THE ELIGIBILITY OF AN
14 ATTRACTION FOR A SIGN.

15 (II) IF THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE APPROVES AN
16 ATTRACTION'S APPLICATION, THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL INVESTIGATE WHETHER
17 THERE IS SPACE AVAILABLE FOR A SIGN FOR THE ATTRACTION.

18 (III) APPROVAL OF A SIGN IS SUBJECT TO SPACE AVAILABILITY
19 BASED ON ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.

20 (2) (I) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL PREPARE A SIGNAGE PLAN
21 FOR ANY SIGNS IT DETERMINES ARE FEASIBLE AND SUBMIT THE PLAN TO THE
22 DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FOR REVIEW.

23 (II) IN REVIEWING A SIGNAGE PLAN, THE DEPARTMENT OF
24 COMMERCE MAY CONSULT WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OFFICES.

25 (3) (I) IF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE APPROVES A SIGNAGE
26 PLAN, THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL DESIGN AND INSTALL THE SIGNS IN THE
27 SIGNAGE PLAN WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE APPROVAL.

28 (II) AN APPLICANT FOR A SIGN SHALL PAY AN AMOUNT THE
29 ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE FOR EACH SIGN INCLUDED IN THE
30 SIGNAGE PLAN.

1 **(F) THE ADMINISTRATION MAY REQUEST THAT THE APPLICANT DESIGN**
2 **AND INSTALL THE SIGNS APPROVED IN THE SIGNAGE PLAN USING VENDORS AND**
3 **SPECIFICATIONS APPROVED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.**

4 **(G) (1) THE ADMINISTRATION MAY CHARGE AN APPLICANT A**
5 **REASONABLE ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE FEE TO ADMINISTER AND MANAGE THE**
6 **PROGRAM FOR THE DURATION THAT EACH SIGN IN THE SIGNAGE PLAN IS**
7 **INSTALLED.**

8 **(2) EACH SIGN INSTALLED ON BEHALF OF AN APPLICANT MAY BE**
9 **REMOVED IF THE APPLICANT FAILS TO PAY THE ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE FEE.**

10 **(H) (1) THE ADMINISTRATION MAY AMEND THE PROGRAM IF THE**
11 **ADMINISTRATION DETERMINES THAT THE PROGRAM MAY RESULT IN A DECREASE**
12 **IN FEDERAL FUNDS PROVIDED TO THE STATE FOR HIGHWAY USE.**

13 **(2) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL NOTIFY THE FOLLOWING**
14 **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES AT LEAST 30 DAYS BEFORE ANY AMENDMENTS ARE**
15 **MADE TO THE PROGRAM AS A RESULT OF A POTENTIAL DECREASE IN FEDERAL**
16 **FUNDS PROVIDED FOR HIGHWAY USE IN THE STATE:**

17 **(I) THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE;**

18 **(II) THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE;**

19 **(III) THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION**
20 **COMMITTEE; AND**

21 **(IV) THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE.**

22 **(I) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION,**
23 **TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A SIGN, AN ATTRACTION SHALL, AT A MINIMUM:**

24 **(I) PROVIDE RECREATIONAL, HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, OR**
25 **LEISURE ACTIVITIES TO THE PUBLIC;**

26 **(II) BE PRIMARILY A NONRETAIL ATTRACTION, WITH NOT MORE**
27 **THAN 20% OF THE INTERIOR SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THE ATTRACTION DEVOTED TO**
28 **RETAIL SALES;**

29 **(III) BE OPEN TO RANDOM DAILY VISITATION WITHOUT**
30 **ADVANCED RESERVATIONS OR A REQUIRED EXTENDED ATTENDANCE;**

(IV) IF LOCATED IN A DESIGNATED URBAN AREA, MEET MINIMUM VISITOR ATTENDANCE MEASURES ESTABLISHED BY THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE;

(V) BE OPEN AT LEAST:

1. 5 HOURS PER DAY;

2. 4 DAYS PER WEEK, INCLUDING SATURDAY OR SUNDAY;

3. 25 HOURS PER WEEK; AND

4. 8 MONTHS EACH YEAR;

(VI) 1. PUBLISH A BROCHURE OR HOST A WEBSITE THAT PROVIDES THE ATTRACTION'S HOURS OF OPERATION; AND

2. POST THE HOURS OF OPERATION AT THE ATTRACTION LOCATION, CONSISTENT WITH THE HOURS OF OPERATION PUBLISHED IN THE ATTRACTION'S BROCHURE OR ON ITS WEBSITE;

(VII) PROVIDE PUBLIC ACCESS TO ON-SITE RESTROOMS, WATER, TELEPHONES, AND PARKING;

(VIII) PROVIDE AN INTERPRETER OR A GUIDE, A PRINTED SELF-GUIDED TOUR, OR INTERPRETATIVE SIGNING DURING ALL HOURS OF OPERATION; AND

(IX) MEET FEDERAL AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESSIBILITY.

(2) (I) THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE MAY APPROVE AN APPLICATION FOR AN ATTRACTION THAT DOES NOT MEET ALL OF THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION IF THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE DETERMINES THAT THE ATTRACTION IS IMPORTANT TO THE STATE OR THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

(II) AN ATTRACTION APPROVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL BE LISTED ON THE PROGRAM'S WEBSITE.

(III) THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE MAY WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT THAT AN ATTRACTION BE OPEN AT LEAST 8 MONTHS EACH YEAR FOR SEASONAL ATTRACTIONS.

(J) (1) TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SIGNAGE, AN ATTRACTION MAY NOT, BASED ON A DETERMINATION BY THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE, ALREADY BE WELL-SIGNED ON A TOURIST AREA CORRIDOR.

(2) THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF ATTRACTIONS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SIGNAGE WITH GENERIC SYMBOLS APPROVED FOR USE:

(I) VISITOR CENTERS;

(II) GOLF COURSES;

(III) ANTIQUES ROWS;

(IV) MARINAS;

(V) WINERIES;

(VI) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, BREWERIES AND DISTILLERIES; AND

(VII) ANY ADDITIONAL CATEGORY IDENTIFIED BY THE ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE.

(3) THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SHALL DETERMINE THE GENERIC SYMBOLS AND CRITERIA FOR BREWERY AND DISTILLERY ELIGIBILITY IN CONSULTATION WITH A GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE SET OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING:

(I) STATE LEADERS IN THE BREWING AND DISTILLING INDUSTRIES;

(II) LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS;

(III) LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS; AND

(IV) LEADERS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY.

(K) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL PRIORITIZE DESIGNING AND INSTALLING SIGNS FOR APPLICANTS THAT WERE APPROVED UNDER ANY SIMILAR

1 **ADMINISTRATION SIGNAGE PROGRAM BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2024, IN THE ORDER OF**
2 **APPROVAL AS FEASIBLE.**

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
4 October 1, 2024.