

VISIT BALTIMORE

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BALTIMORE, MD 21202

BALTIMORE.ORG

Council Bill 21-0029

March 4, 2021

TO: Members of the Ways and Means Committee
FROM: Al Hutchinson, President & CEO, Visit Baltimore
RE: Council Bill 21-0029
POSITION: Unfavorable

To: Councilman Costello, Chair Ways & Means Committee:

Any increased costs that are passed along to visitors will be detrimental to our tourism recovery efforts in Baltimore. We know this based on recent research that Visit Baltimore commissioned from a leading tourism economics group.

In 2019, we asked Destination Analysts to poll leisure travelers in order to:

- Measure awareness and perceptions of Baltimore
- Benchmark competitive position
- And understand what drives or deters visitation

Metro residents from the surrounding regions of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties were surveyed.

Regional consumers ranked sports/sporting events, our waterfront, historic attractions, restaurants, and arts & culture as top reasons to visit.

Data showed that the average in-market spending by Metro residents has increased by almost \$15 since 2017 but over 40% of Metro residents have decreased their visitation since 2017.

Concern for safety is the primary reason Metro residents avoid the city. Expense is the third reason survey participants gave for not visiting the city (25.4%)

Regardless of their current frequency of visit, residents were asked what would motivate them to visit Baltimore more frequently. Aside from “more police presence”, “more” or “discounted parking” was the second greatest motivator.

Visit Baltimore’s position would be non-supportive of any increase of parking fees.

We respectfully request an unfavorable report on Council Bill 21-0029