



*To Lead, Advocate and Connect as the Voice of Business*

## **House Bill 896 - Environment - Statewide Green Business Certification Program – Establishment**

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 26, 2020

### **SUPPORT**

House Bill 896 charges the Maryland State Department of the Environment to enhance the current statewide Green Registry program with policies and standards that mirror the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program.

Montgomery County's Green Business Certification Program is a voluntary recognition program designed to encourage businesses and other organizations to take steps that reduce their ecological footprint. It was created 10 years ago (December 2009) through a partnership between the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, and Montgomery College.

Initially, certification was based exclusively on an application designed by DEP for businesses with office-based operations, and expanded a number of years later to include landscape businesses. In 2015, the program recast itself as an umbrella recognition program to expand program eligibility, and began accepting businesses certified through outside third-party standards to complement the applications created by DEP. These third-party certification standards include B Lab, Green America, the Green Restaurant Association, Green Seal, the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System, Veriflora® Sustainably Grown, USDA Organic Program, Certified Naturally Grown and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). Businesses from virtually all sectors are now eligible for certification, including restaurants, offices, hotels, cleaning companies, landscapers, home based businesses, farms, and more.

Many Chamber members, from a vast number of industries, currently participate in the Green Business Certification Program: AstraZeneca, Capitol Document Solutions, CohnReznick LLP, Copper Canyon Grill, Corcoran Caterers, Inc., Fitzgerald Auto Mall, Honest Tea, Information Systems Solutions, Inc., Marriott International, Inc., MoCo's Founding Farmers, Montgomery College, Red Coats, Inc., Rife International, LLC, Social & Scientific Systems, Inc., and United Solutions, LLC.

The climate crisis must be tackled and solved by a variety to stakeholders – businesses included. This program is an incentive to businesses to green their practices across nearly every sector. As businesses work to green their practices, they should be afforded the ability to differentiate themselves in the marketplace to consumers as stewards of the environment. By bringing this certification to a statewide level, more business will be encouraged to participate which better the state and region's climate.

For the aforementioned reasons, **the Chamber strongly supports House Bill 896 and respectfully urges a favorable report.**

*The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) accelerates the success of our nearly 500 members by advocating for increased business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and is proud to be a Montgomery County Green Certified Business.*

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