



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE**

**SENATE BILL 703 – PROCUREMENT – MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES –
QUALIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION**

Sponsor: Senator West

March 31, 2021

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 703, which would require the Board of Public Works to adopt regulations to require the certification of a business as a minority business enterprise without requiring the business to file any additional paperwork other than evidence of certification under the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and that the business remains qualified under the federal program.

In the Greater Baltimore Committee report *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, eight core pillars were identified for a competitive business environment. One of these essential pillars is **regulatory policies that are streamlined, stable and predictable**.

Maryland must project to businesses within and outside the state that its government regulatory policies are reasonable, relevant, free of surprises or redundancy, and considerate of businesses' sense of urgency. The GBC contends that eliminating unnecessary certification requirements for small and minority-owned businesses is a common sense proposal.

The federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program is both targeted and thorough; a certification from this entity should be enough to endorse qualifying Maryland businesses as minority business enterprises.

One of the key tenets of the GBC's 2021 General Assembly legislative priorities is **advocacy for policy, funding, and regulatory solutions to accelerate economic recovery with an emphasis on support for small and minority-owned businesses**. During this pandemic, disadvantaged, minority, and women owned businesses should be afforded the most streamlined possible process to receive the aid they desperately need. Eliminating redundancy in certification regulations is a simple but significantly beneficial way to help disadvantaged businesses recover.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 703.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 66-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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