



Wes Moore | Governor  
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor  
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce  
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

**DATE:** March 26, 2024  
**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 1022  
**BILL TITLE:** Maryland Higher Education Commission - Academic Program Approval and Institutional Mission Statements - Requirements  
**COMMITTEE:** House Appropriations  
**POSITION:** Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 1022 - Maryland Higher Education Commission - Academic Program Approval and Institutional Mission Statements – Requirements.

**Bill Summary:**

Senate Bill 1022 alters requirements relating to the State Plan of Higher Education, and alters requirements relating to the Maryland Higher Education Commission’s academic program approval process. It also requires the Departments of Commerce and Labor as well as the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to have be responsible for collecting certain data relating to workforce needs as well as coordinating that data with the other agencies.

**Background:**

The FY 2024 Budget Bill (Chapter 101, Acts of 2023) included language authorizing the Maryland Program Approval Process Workgroup to make recommendations to improve the academic program approval process of MHEC The workgroup consisted of legislators, representatives of higher education institutions, and the Acting Secretary of MHEC. They met several times and were briefed on current processes utilized by MHEC as well as national processes and best practices, and ultimately submitted a report with 23 recommendations. This legislation incorporates the workgroup’s recommendations.

**Rationale:**

Commerce agrees that there needs to be better collaboration between our agency, the Department of Labor, and MHEC as it relates to workforce needs and programs being offered in the State’s higher education institutions. Commerce also agrees that the three agencies need to be utilizing consistent and agreed upon data to assess these needs. Commerce thanks the sponsor and the Committee for adopting an amendment to slightly alter the language regarding the hiring of an individual responsible for these items as it is the Department’s position that we already have multiple individuals on staff that are responsible for certain parts of these requirements. Commerce looks forward to increasing the partnership between our agency, Labor and MHEC to ensure that Maryland’s higher education institutions are well positioned to be able to train and educate Maryland students in the industries and areas of highest need to support the workforce needs of the State and grow Maryland’s economy.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report with amendment on Senate Bill 1022.