



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

DATE: March 12, 2024
BILL NO: House Bill 1206
BILL TITLE: Maryland-Ireland Trade Commission – Establishment
COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports House Bill 1206 - Maryland-Ireland Trade Commission - Establishment, with amendment.

Bill Summary:

House Bill 1206 establishes the Maryland-Ireland Trade Commission within Commerce to study and make recommendations regarding the promotion of trade between Maryland and Ireland. The Commission is required to submit its recommendations by December 1, 2025 and each December thereafter.

Background:

Recognizing the number of Marylanders with Irish heritage and the ties between our State and Ireland, this legislation seeks to formalize and improve upon the relationship. Through the study of trade, policy, business, academic and other issues the Commission will make recommendations to promote trade between Maryland and Ireland.

Rationale:

Commerce through its Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT) seeks to support Maryland businesses and grow the State’s economy by assisting Maryland firms in exporting their products and services to international markets. OIIT also helps these businesses effectively initiate or expand their overseas marketing. Despite the strong connections between Maryland and Ireland, Ireland is not even among the State’s top 30 export markets, demonstrating the potential room for growth. In successfully implementing the recommendations of the Commission, Commerce OIIT will be able to increase potential benefits to the Maryland companies they assist.

Commerce would like to thank the sponsor for his leadership in this area and for working with the Department on this legislation. The Department has also discussed an amendment with the sponsor to sunset the Commission after they meet and provide their recommendations to then allow staff resources both at Commerce and in the Office of the Secretary or State to be dedicated to implementing those recommendations.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report with amendment on House Bill 1206.

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 1206

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO.1

On page 3, strike beginning with (1) in line 18 through (5) in line 26, inclusively.

AMENDMENT NO.2

On page 4, strike “and each December 1 thereafter,” from lines 18 and 19.

AMENDMENT NO.3

On page 4, strike the entirety of Section 2. Renumber Section 3 to become Section 2 and add “It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of September 30, 2026, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.”

Explanation: These amendments will sunset the Commission after they make their recommendations to promote trade between Maryland and Ireland. The Department of Commerce and the Secretary of State will then be responsible for implementing the recommendations as appropriate.