



February 20, 2025

The Hon. Vanessa Atterbeary  
Chair, House Ways & Means Committee  
130 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: HB 648/SB 377— ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Business Resource  
Initiative for Developmental Growth and Empowerment (Bridge) - SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

On behalf of the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce, I am writing in full support of **HB 648**, the Bridge Program Bill. This legislation is necessary to support Maryland's economic development for businesses in diverse communities.

Establishing the BRIDGE Program provides grants to specific social enterprises, for-profit organizations, and charitable organizations to establish diverse business incubators. At its core, the BRIDGE Program is designed to create new businesses through the investment of grant funding and other funding generated for startups in communities in the State of Maryland. The Prince George's Chamber supports HB 648 for two reasons. First, this historic legislation will make Maryland business creation more equitable, competitive, and current with modern enterprise standards and protocols. Secondly, the bill, if passed, addresses the immense need for economic development in underserved communities.

For these reasons and more, I respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE REPORT** for **HB 648**.

Warm regards,

*Alexander K. Austin*

Alexander K. Austin  
**President & CEO**  
Prince George's Chamber of Commerce

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