

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

House Bill 896

(Delegate Shetty, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Environment - Statewide Green Business Certification Program - Establishment**

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This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish and administer a statewide green business certification program. The certification program must (1) recognize businesses that operate in a manner that reduces their environmental footprint and (2) provide consumers with a way to identify businesses that have been certified as green businesses. MDE must update and enhance the program established under the bill in consultation with the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program. MDE may adopt implementing regulations. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MDE can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources. State revenues are not directly affected.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Meaningful.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** MDE administers the Maryland Green Registry, a free, voluntary program that offers tips and resources to help businesses and other organizations set and meet their own goals on the path to sustainability. To become a member in MDE's program, a facility must (1) download the member profile form; (2) share information on at least five environmental practices in place at the businesses' facility; and (3) provide a measurable result related to at least one of these practices. According to MDE, the program has almost 600 members.

Montgomery County's Green Business Certification Program is also a voluntary recognition program designed to encourage businesses and other organizations to take steps that reduce their ecological footprint. The program's [website](#) contains green business spotlights, news about green businesses, and information on how to become certified. There are numerous different categories of certification under the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program; several of these categories require certification by third-parties, such as the ISO 14001 Certified Environmental Management System, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program, Veriflora® Sustainably Grown, and the Green Restaurant Association.

**Small Business Effect:** Any business that receives certification under the statewide program may realize marketing benefits which could result in new or expanded business opportunities. There may be costs to certify a business if the business is not already operating in a manner that qualifies for certification. However, participation is voluntary.

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Montgomery County; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 2020  
rh/lgc Third Reader - March 14, 2020  
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 14, 2020

Analysis by: Kathleen P. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510