

# HOUSE BILL 706

C8

3lr1333

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By: **Delegate A. Jones**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2023

Assigned to: Ways and Means

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Economic Development – Sustainable Communities – Business Facade**  
3 **Improvement Program**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Business Facade Improvement Program in the  
5 Department of Commerce to assist certain qualified businesses located in  
6 sustainable communities with improving the outside appearance of the qualified  
7 businesses' buildings or facilities; and generally relating to the Business Facade  
8 Improvement Program.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
10 Article – Economic Development  
11 Section 1–101(a), (b), and (c)  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

14 BY adding to  
15 Article – Economic Development  
16 Section 5–2301 through 5–2303 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 23. Business  
17 Facade Improvement Program”  
18 Annotated Code of Maryland  
19 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

20 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
21 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

22 **Article – Economic Development**

23 1–101.

24 (a) In this division the following words have the meanings indicated.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (b) "County" means a county of the State or Baltimore City.

2 (c) "Department" means the Department of Commerce.

3 **SUBTITLE 23. BUSINESS FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.**

4 **5-2301.**

5 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
6 INDICATED.

7 (B) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE BUSINESS FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

8 (C) "QUALIFIED BUSINESS" MEANS A BUSINESS THAT:

9 (1) IS LOCATED IN A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY; AND

10 (2) PLANS TO IMPROVE THE OUTSIDE APPEARANCE OF THE  
11 BUSINESS'S BUILDING OR FACILITY.

12 (D) "SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY" MEANS AN AREA DESIGNATED AS A  
13 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY UNDER § 6-205 OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY  
14 DEVELOPMENT ARTICLE.

15 **5-2302.**

16 (A) THERE IS A BUSINESS FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN THE  
17 DEPARTMENT.

18 (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO ASSIST QUALIFIED BUSINESSES  
19 WITH IMPROVING THE OUTSIDE APPEARANCE OF THE BUSINESSES' BUILDINGS AND  
20 FACILITIES.

21 (C) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DISTRIBUTE FUNDS FROM THE  
22 PROGRAM TO COUNTIES THAT:

23 (I) HAVE AT LEAST ONE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY; AND

24 (II) APPLY FOR THE FUNDS.

25 (2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP:

26 (I) AN APPLICATION PROCESS FOR COUNTIES SEEKING TO  
27 PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM; AND

1                   **(II) CRITERIA FOR:**

2                               **1. RATING COUNTIES THAT APPLY FOR FUNDS; AND**

3                               **2. AWARDING FUNDS TO COUNTIES.**

4           **(D) (1) EACH COUNTY THAT RECEIVES FUNDS UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF**  
5 **THIS SECTION SHALL DISTRIBUTE GRANTS TO QUALIFIED BUSINESSES THAT APPLY**  
6 **FOR A GRANT.**

7                   **(2) EACH COUNTY SHALL DEVELOP:**

8                               **(I) A GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS FOR QUALIFIED**  
9 **BUSINESSES SEEKING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM; AND**

10                   **(II) CRITERIA FOR:**

11                               **1. RATING QUALIFIED BUSINESSES THAT APPLY FOR**  
12 **GRANTS; AND**

13                               **2. AWARDING GRANTS TO QUALIFIED BUSINESSES.**

14           **(E) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE**  
15 **GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF**  
16 **\$5,000,000 TO THE PROGRAM.**

17 **5-2303.**

18           **THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SUBTITLE.**

19           **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July**  
20 **1, 2023.**