

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 179 (Delegate Vogel)

Economic Matters and Government,
Labor, and Elections

Department of Commerce - Complaint Portal and Annual Report

This bill requires the Department of Commerce to create and maintain a portal on its website that allows members of the public to file a complaint if a governmental unit (at the State or local level) takes longer than 60 days to process an application for a license, form, certificate, certification, permit, or registration for a business or nonprofit organization. The bill further requires Commerce, by September 15, 2026, and every September 15 thereafter, to submit a report on the complaints filed through the portal to specified committees of the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Commerce advises it can handle the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

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

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The report submitted by Commerce must identify, with respect to each complaint received during the preceding fiscal year, the governmental unit responsible for the license, form, certificate, certification, permit, or registration. Commerce must make reasonable efforts to anonymize the data to protect the privacy of any business or nonprofit organization to which a complaint may be related.

A person may not file a complaint using the portal if a State or local law, ordinance, or resolution authorizes the governmental unit to take longer than 60 days to process the application.

Current Law: Among other duties and objectives, Commerce must assist the growth and revitalization of small businesses; support the growth of the State and regional economies by providing consulting, technical assistance, and liaison activities on business and economic development issues; promote regulatory reform and coordinate efforts with other State and local units; and encourage location and development of new businesses in the State and the retention and expansion of present enterprises in coordination with local governments and local economic development units.

Additional Comments: Most of the State agencies that responded to a request for information advise that they typically process applications in less than 60 days.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 496 and HB 1038 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Commerce; Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of Natural Resources; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of the Environment; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Labor; Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Municipal League; Department of Legislative Services

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