



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**HB 896**

**DATE: February 26, 2020**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Shetty, et al.**

**ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Amy Samman (amy.samman@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT (Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection)**

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### **Environment – Statewide Green Business Certification Program – Establishment**

House Bill 896 requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish and administer a Statewide green business certification program. The program must recognize businesses that operate in a manner that reduces their environmental footprint and provide consumers with a way to identify businesses that have been certified as green businesses.

Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection (MCDEP) supports the creation of a Green Business Certification Program to complement the existing Maryland Green Registry, managed by MDE. The Green Registry would serve as a foundational program and on-ramp to a certification program involving third-party verification for green business leaders wanting to take their day-to-day environmental practices to the next level. The establishment of a green business certification program will help drive demand for green products and services. This, in turn, will help establish Maryland as a green business destination and bolster a fundamentally important engine of our economic development.

Montgomery County currently has a Green Business Certification Program that operates as a voluntary recognition program designed to encourage businesses and other organizations to take steps to reduce their ecological footprint. It is an "umbrella" program in which the County automatically recognizes businesses certified through any of ten robust third-party standards. The County doesn't have specific expertise in sectors like commercial cleaning or greening a restaurant, so it relies on these third parties to conduct verification and provide businesses with guidance. With a third-party certification program, jurisdictions can establish programs that incentivize businesses to pursue ambitious sustainability goals. In Montgomery County, certified green businesses in our vendor database get a green business designation which allows procurement officials to narrow their vendor search by using a green screen.

In a natural resources constrained world, sustainability and innovation will be fundamental drivers of economic success. Encouraging businesses to reduce their environmental footprint is a step in the right direction.

For the foregoing reasons, MCDEP respectfully requests a favorable report on House bill 896.