

January 20, 2021

**Testimony on HB 133 –
State Finance and Procurement - Appropriation Reductions (Board of Public Works Budget Reduction
Clarification Act)
Appropriations**

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 133, which would bring greater clarity to the Board of Public Works' (BPW) budget reduction power.

The financial decisions made by the Board of Public Works can have huge effects on the lives and livelihoods of Marylanders and their families. Currently, the BPW can make cuts to appropriations in the state's budget of up to 25%, but it's not clear whether these cuts are to be made only to a specific line item or if multiple cuts can be made throughout the fiscal year.

HB 133 aims to bring greater clarity to the budget reduction process by clarifying that BPW can make budget cuts of up to 25% over the course of a fiscal year, not 25% each time it meets. That BPW can cut 25% of a line item so that we can sustain existing programs and it extends the number of business days required to provide public notice of any budget cuts.

The budget reduction process for financial decisions affecting such huge amounts of taxpayer funds should be clear and allow citizens and their elected representatives adequate time to review and respond. Clarity around the number of cuts that can be made by BPW and expanded public notice allows for important government decisions, particularly decisions about how taxpayer money is spent, to be made in manner that is transparent and accountable.

The lack of clarity regarding decisions on appropriations reductions and the limited timeframe for providing citizens with the information undermines the legislative process. HB 133 addresses this issue directly and for those reasons we request a favorable report.