

SB 678_Western MD Task Force_Support.pdf

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Position: FAV



Larry Hogan | Governor
Boyd Rutherford | Lt. Governor
Kelly M. Schulz | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: February 17, 2021 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget and Taxation
BILL NO: Senate Bill 678
BILL TITLE: Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland - Extension of Report Deadline and Task Force
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 678 - Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland - Extension of Report Deadline and Task Force

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 678 extends the deadline by which the Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland (Task Force) must submit its final report to the Governor and the General Assembly from January 1, 2021 to October 1, 2021. It also extends the period of time by which the legislation creating the task force remains effective from June 30, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

Background:

Chapter 207, Acts of 2020, created the Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland. The Task Force was directed to study the current economic conditions of Western Maryland and make recommendations regarding potential methods for the improvement of the economies of Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties. Commerce was named as staff to the Task Force.

The Task Force met virtually seven times between September 2020 and January 2021 and has drafted and approved an interim report containing 14 initial recommendations which aim to improve different aspects of Western Maryland's economy.

Rationale:

Senate Bill 678 will allow the Task Force the additional time needed to complete its work and submit a final report this year. Members of the Task Force — and Commerce as staff to the Task Force — recognize that increasing economic vitality in Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties is not a short term project, and this legislation will allow the group the time needed to fully review the actions needed to improve the economies of this part of the state. Commerce is very willing to continue in its role as staff to the Task Force to complete this work.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 678.