

HB1077 Citizen Testimony – March 9th, 2021

Good day members of the HGO committee. My name is William Moore. I am a resident and small business owner in Anne Arundel County. My family moved here in 2014 for the beauty and charm of living in the Chesapeake Bay region. In 2017, I founded my software company and was very pleased with support received in early 2018 from Anne Arundel County Economic Development in helping to launch our business. My company has been fortunate during the COVID crisis and is growing rapidly in 2021 as we have signed agreements with 2 global 500 companies and now have customers in 14 countries. In the 1981, Microsoft was also a small business located in Seattle and a few years later Dell Computer launched in Austin Texas. Like what Microsoft did for Seattle and Dell did for Austin, our mission is to grow and bring hundreds and maybe even thousands of high paying tech jobs to Anne Arundel county in the coming years.

The last year has brought many challenges to all of us, especially for many small business owners who have families to feed and have lost everything. My hope and vision for our community was for county leaders to stand up and support all small businesses struggling during this time. While I have seen some hope with special accommodations - such as outside seating for independent restaurants - other small businesses have not been treated as fairly. One egregious example of unfair treatment is the aggressive persecution of the Riva open-air market by county officials which has left me saddened and perplexed.

The Riva open-air market provides an all-important service with fresh food for my wife and small children as it does for so many others. The way the county has treated this business has caused me to pause and reassess whether Anne Arundel County is the right place to grow my company.

Microsoft started in Albuquerque, New Mexico in the late 1970's, but they moved to Seattle in 1981 as they saw it as a better business environment for their growing company. My company is today at that same crossroads as Microsoft was 40 years ago.

While I still would like to grow our company in Anne Arundel county - I believe it is vital for HB1077 (exemption for open-air food markets) be passed as it directly effects the nourishment of my family and other families in our local community. I will be watching this bill closely and others now to see how county and state leaders support small business owners as we all continue to navigate through this crisis.

Thank you for your time,

William