



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

**HOUSE BILL 1425 – INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS –
FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND COORDINATION UNIT – ESTABLISHED
Sponsor – Delegate R. Lewis**

March 15, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

House Bill 1425 would establish a temporary unit in the Governor’s Grants Office to track federal infrastructure grants and assist State agencies in the award of grants under the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. This office would be led by a Chief Infrastructure Officer.

President Biden signed the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law on Nov. 15, 2021. This 2,700 page bill addressed core infrastructure needs such as transportation, broadband, water, energy, cybersecurity, and disaster mitigation and resiliency. The bill included formula increases for various federal grant programs, as well as created a large number of new competitive grant programs.

With such a large influx of federal funds coming to Maryland, transparency and coordination are of utmost importance. Not only does House Bill 1425 task the newly created Federal Infrastructure Investment and Coordination Unit with tracking grants and assisting State agencies in the award of grants, but it also requires the unit to develop a strategy, subject to budget committee approval, on how the funds will be allocated and how they can best be used to advance existing State priorities. The Chief Infrastructure Officer would also be required to create an online dashboard to provide the public with an overview of the infrastructure grants and subsequent projects funded in part or entirely under the act.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) contends that it is often challenging to identify where federal grant funds are being spent. The budget often cites federal funds as a funding component of a project, but doesn’t list from what grant the funds originated. Requiring the Governor’s Grant Office and the newly created Federal Infrastructure Investment and Coordination Unit to track and monitor such spending is an important step to address transparency in government.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 1425.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org