



Senate Bill 9 -- Procurement - Minority Business Enterprises - Qualification and Certification
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 25, 2022
Support

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), the voice of business in Metro Maryland, supports Senate Bill 9 – *Procurement – Minority Business Enterprises – Qualifications and Certification*. Senate Bill 9 allows a business to certify as a state Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) without any paperwork other than evidence of a current certification under the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program.

The State's MBE program is certified by the Maryland Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Office of Minority Business Enterprise. The federal DBE program is certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation and has similar aims as Maryland's MBE program, which is to increase participation of minority and women owned businesses in government projects.

Montgomery County and Metro Maryland are home to a vibrant and innovative community of federal government contracting companies. These small businesses are required to go through a rigorous and thorough certification processes to contract with federal government agencies. When these businesses apply for MBE certification, the process can seem redundant and time consuming if a company has already earned certification through a similar federal government program.

MCCC has long sought to grow the success of small and disadvantaged federal government contractors. The most prominent effort is the Montgomery County Chamber Community Foundation's Veteran Institute for Procurement (VIP), a free nationally recognized federal procurement training program for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses. Even as the VIP program continues to achieve strong and measurable success, one hurdle often encountered by program graduates is the time and effort it takes to certify as a minority business contractor. Senate Bill 9 addresses this issue by reducing a time-consuming and redundant regulatory hurdle of earning similar certifications at multiple levels of government.

MCCC contends that passage of Senate Bill 9 will also encourage increased minority contractor participation by eliminating a redundant certification process. Allowing federal DBEs to certify as state MBEs by simply providing evidence of current federal certification is an important step forward to encouraging more participation of minority companies, including many firms that are part of Maryland's growing small business contractor segment.

For these reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce supports Senate Bill 9 and respectfully requests a favorable report.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of our nearly 500 members, advocates for growth in business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and a proud Montgomery County Green Certified Business.

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