



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

**SENATE BILL 9 – Procurement – Minority Business Enterprises –
Qualification and Certification
Sponsor: Senator Chris West**

January 25, 2022

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

Position: Support

Senate Bill 9 would require the Board of Public Works to adopt regulations to require the certification of a business as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) without requiring the business to file any additional paperwork other than evidence of certification under the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and that the business remains qualified under the federal program.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports this legislation. The federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program is both targeted and thorough; a certification from this entity should be sufficient to endorse qualifying Maryland businesses as Minority Business Enterprises. During the pandemic, disadvantaged, minority, and women owned businesses should be afforded the most streamlined process to receive the aid they desperately need. Eliminating redundancy in certification regulations is a simple but significantly beneficial way to help disadvantaged businesses recover.

In the Greater Baltimore Committee report *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, eight core pillars were identified for a competitive business environment.

Regulatory policies that are streamlined, stable and predictable. Maryland must project to businesses within and outside the state that its government regulatory policies are reasonable, relevant, free of surprises or redundancy, and considerate of businesses' sense of urgency.

Government leadership that unites with business as a partner. Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.

Minority businesses face significant hurdles that stem from the legacy of systemic efforts to keep them from being full participants in the economy. The GBC contends that reducing redundancy for minority businesses will be a benefit to them individually and the entire business community as a whole.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 9.

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

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