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Testimony in Support of  
House Bill 418 - Economic Development – More Jobs for Marylanders Program – Extension and Alterations  
House Ways and Means Committee  
March 02, 2022

**The Rural Maryland Council supports House Bill 418 - Economic Development – More Jobs for Marylanders Program – Extension and Alterations.** The bill will alter the circumstances and period of time the Department of Commerce may provide a qualified business a certificate certifying that an eligible project is enrolled in the Program. The bill will also transfer, from the More Jobs for Marylanders Tax Credit Reserve Fund to the General Fund, an amount equal to the amount stated in the final tax credit, rather than that stated in the initial tax credit certificate. HB-418 will allow more businesses to qualify for the tax credit, encouraging more businesses to locate in or remain in the State and provide more jobs to Maryland residents.

Rural areas recover from economic disasters at slower rates than urban and suburban areas, adding on to the already higher rates of unemployment and poverty. The Great Recession's hardest hit regions of Maryland had not fully recovered before being hit by the pandemic in 2020. The Eastern Shore and Western Maryland, once manufacturing hubs, have seen higher than state average rates of unemployment. The Eastern Shore has seen a loss of business establishments, and Western Maryland has seen a decrease of the manufacturing jobs that once made up a large portion of the area's employment. According to the Federal Reserve, Maryland reported 103,000 manufacturing jobs in 2014, an industry low from a high of 200,000 in 1992. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, manufacturing jobs rebounded to 114,100 in 2019.

The More Jobs for Marylanders Act offers a powerful incentive to strengthen local economies and increase employment opportunities in the hardest hit regions of Maryland. According to the *Evaluation of the More Jobs for Marylanders Program* compiled by the Department of Legislative Services, the 42 projects that received a first business year tax credit between October 2018 to May 2020 reported creating almost 1,000 jobs. HB-418 will increase the number of eligible projects, ultimately increasing the number of good paying jobs.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of House Bill 418.

*The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.*

**"A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland"**