

HB 1206_Commerce_Maryland Ireland Trade Commission

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Position: FAV



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

DATE: March 26, 2024
BILL NO: House Bill 1206
BILL TITLE: Maryland-Ireland Trade Commission – Establishment
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports House Bill 1206 - Maryland-Ireland Trade Commission - Establishment.

Bill Summary:

As amended, House Bill 1206 establishes the Maryland-Ireland Trade Commission within Commerce to study and make recommendations regarding the promotion of trade between Maryland and Ireland. The Commission is required to submit its recommendations by December 1, 2025. The Commission is scheduled to sunset after September 2026.

Background:

Recognizing the number of Marylanders with Irish heritage and the ties between our State and Ireland, this legislation seeks to formalize and improve upon the relationship. Through the study of trade, policy, business, academic and other issues the Commission will make recommendations to promote trade between Maryland and Ireland.

Rationale:

Commerce through its Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT) seeks to support Maryland businesses and grow the State’s economy by assisting Maryland firms in exporting their products and services to international markets. OIIT also helps these businesses effectively initiate or expand their overseas marketing. Despite the strong connections between Maryland and Ireland, Ireland is not even among the State’s top 30 export markets, demonstrating the potential room for growth. In successfully implementing the recommendations of the Commission, Commerce OIIT will be able to increase potential benefits to the Maryland companies they assist.

Commerce would like to thank the sponsor for his leadership in this area and for working with the Department on this legislation. The Department supports the amendments added in the House that sunset the Commission after two years.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1206.

MD HB 1206 support memo SenFinance MD Ireland Cmsn

Uploaded by: Marta Harting

Position: FAV



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Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1206 – Establishment of MD-Ireland Trade Commission

Maryland Senate Finance Committee
Senator Pam Beidle, Chair

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Diageo North America is contacting you in support of HB 1206. Diageo North America is the leading premium drinks business and one of the best-performing consumer packaged goods companies across the United States and Canada. Our 200 plus brands are enjoyed across our market and include some of the world’s oldest and best loved brands, such as Johnnie Walker, Ketel One, Captain Morgan, Crown Royal, Bulleit, Don Julio, and Guinness.

As you are aware, we own and operate Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, Ireland, the Guinness Open Gate Brewery in Baltimore County, and in September 2023 we opened our Guinness Open Gate Brewery in Chicago. In Maryland, we are Baltimore County’s top tourist destination where we serve food and brew multiple varieties of Guinness, including Baltimore Blonde for on-site consumption. Diageo has invested over \$90 million dollars in Baltimore County since 2018, and we’ve welcomed over 1.7 million visitors. We’ve contributed over \$2 million to our local community partners including Maryland Food Bank, Oyster Recovery Partnership, and Job Opportunities Task Force to name a few.

We are proud to bring this iconic brand and customer experience to the U.S. and have supported various Irish-American organizations and causes over the years including Friendly Son’s of St. Patrick, Hibernian Society, Irish Railroad Workers Museum, and Irish Dance Schools. We have also supported Maryland officials when trade delegations traveled to Ireland by supplying information and making introductions as needed. Additionally, we have welcomed the ambassadors from Ireland and Northern Ireland to our Maryland brewery.

Diageo supports HB 1206 which would establish the Maryland Ireland Trade Commission. We believe this Commission will further strengthen the relationship with the State of Maryland and Ireland by promoting business and investment opportunities in Maryland and Ireland.