



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***House Bill 581
Transparent Government Act***

Position: Support

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Date: February 13, 2024

From: Les Knapp

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** HB 581. House Bill 581 would reinforce the work already underway within MDE under the leadership of the Moore-Miller Administration and Secretary McIlwain. MDE has been diligent over the past year to ensure all permitting processes are consistent, transparent, and timely. The Bill would further expand on Secretary McIlwain's top priorities of being customer-friendly by streamlining our current catalog of permits, establishing timelines, and engaging stakeholders in our processes.

Bill Summary

House Bill 581 would establish the Government Efficiency Commission to monitor processing of permits, licenses, and certificates (collectively "Permit(s)") statewide and to recommend changes to improve efficiency in these processes. The objective of the Bill is to improve economic competitiveness, by identifying and mitigating barriers to obtaining necessary Permits. To facilitate the activities of the new Commission, the Bill requires that every agency or governmental unit produce a report providing the Commission with detailed information on its Permit processes, and post information on publicly accessible websites.

Position Rationale

Overall, MDE's mission is simple: To protect and restore the environment for the health and well-being of all Marylanders. With this mission, MDE also recognizes the need to be customer service oriented by ensuring that our permitting processes are timely, constituent, and transparent. House Bill 581 will ensure that MDE is accountable for the timeframes established through this legislation and will demonstrate our commitment to Maryland's economy.

For the reasons detailed above, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 581.

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