



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

DATE: February 13, 2024
BILL NO: House Bill 581
BILL TITLE: State Government – Permits, Licenses, and Certificates – Processing (Transparent Government Act of 2024)
COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports House Bill 581 – State Government – Permits, Licenses, and Certificates – Processing (Transparent Government Act of 2024).

Bill Summary:

House Bill 581 requires that each principal department and independent unit of State government which issues permits, licenses, and certificates create a catalog of permits, licenses, and certificates it issues. The catalog must include information such as the length of time the permit, license and certificate is valid, the application process for each, and the length of time to review and make a determination regarding the application, among other things. The legislation also creates the Government Efficiency Commission, to be staffed by the Governor’s Office, which is tasked with monitoring efficiency in the processing of permits, licenses and certificates.

Background:

Under current law, various departments and independent units of State government have the statutory or regulatory authority to issue licenses, permits or certificates, but there are no requirements for those agencies and units to publish information publicly about processing times to issue these items.

Rationale:

House Bill 581 will improve predictability for individuals and businesses seeking to build or grow businesses in Maryland. This legislation creates a catalog of required permits, licenses and certificates that are publicly available and includes projected timelines for licensing and permitting applications - and if those established timelines are being met. Having access to this valuable information will help entrepreneurs better plan their business growth. Commerce often hears from business owners and consultants that a barrier to locating or expanding in Maryland is the unpredictability associated with obtaining necessary permits and licenses. Requiring agencies to make information about these processes and timelines publicly available will eliminate that unpredictability, and House Bill 581 goes further by creating the Government Efficiency Commission which will work to improve efficiencies in these processes and ultimately reduce the amount of time businesses have to spend working through permitting and licensing in order to be able to open or expand their business here in Maryland.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 581.