



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

House Bill 581

State Government – Permits, Licenses, and Certificates – Processing (Transparent Government Act of 2024)

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 6,800 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic recovery and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 581 requires certain departments and independent units to create a certain catalog of information relating to permits, licenses, and certificates issued by the department and submit the catalog to the Governor. It also requires departments to post certain information relating to permits, licenses, and certificates on their website. Lastly, the legislation establishes the Government Efficiency Commission.

As a member of the Maryland Economic Council (MEC), the Chamber actively participates in discussions aimed at implementing policies that achieve economic growth. The Council's interim report explains that Maryland consistently ranks at the bottom of the list when it comes to business friendliness and regulatory environments. HB 581 would improve predictability for businesses that are looking to invest in Maryland. Streamlined and efficient permit review processes not only reduce delays in project implementation but also aids in cost projection planning for businesses. Delays in obtaining permits can incur additional expenses including extended construction periods, project management costs, and increased financing.

Businesses have concerns over the lengthy permitting and licensing processes currently in place. We believe that HB 581 is an important first step in addressing and streamlining the state's permitting review process, helping businesses stay competitive by bringing products and services to the market quicker. When businesses experience a predictable and smooth permitting or licensing process, they are more likely to invest in new projects and expand existing operations, ultimately leading to job creation and economic growth.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **favorable report** on **HB 581**.