



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Wes Moore

February 9, 2024

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Distinguished Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

On behalf of Governor Moore and Lieutenant Governor Miller, I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on House Bill 581 - State Government - Permits, Licenses, and Certificates - Processing (Transparent Government Act of 2024).

The first year of the Moore-Miller Administration has been an economic success story for Maryland. We were proud to announce the creation of more than 40,000 new jobs. We've had the lowest unemployment rate in the nation for five months in a row. We secured significant federal investments as we announced the reconstruction of the Frederick Douglass Tunnel in Baltimore and the selection of Greenbelt as the new home of the FBI.

However, over the past decade, Maryland's economic growth has underperformed the country, and that has affected the lives and livelihoods of those who call this great state home. In order to win the decade, we need to commit to making Maryland more economically competitive. And one of the best ways to do that is to make our state government's interactions with businesses more efficient, predictable, and convenient.

The unpredictability of Maryland's licensing and permitting processes is a source of frustration for developers, businesses, and employees and prevents businesses from investing in the state. Maryland is not unique to this situation. States across the country and political spectrum have taken significant steps to address this issue.

The Transparent Government Act is crucial to enhancing Maryland's economic competitiveness. By creating reliability and predictability for the permitting process, the bill aims to cease interactions between state government and business and provide employers with the ability to better plan business development and growth. This legislation requires principal government agencies and independent units in the state government to create and publish a catalog of permits, licenses, and certificates it issues, in addition to processing timelines and regulatory requirements.

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This legislation also creates the Government Efficiency Commission, which is tasked with monitoring and reviewing the efficiency of processing permits, licenses, and certificates. The commission is also responsible for making recommendations about overcoming burdensome requirements and making recommendations about creating reliability in these processes.

The administration requests seven (7) technical amendments on the following page that aim to streamline the process for agencies and units responsible for compiling the annual reports and expanding the Government Efficiency Commission to include the Secretary of DoIT or the Secretary's designee.

With these provisions and amendments combined, the Transparent Government Act aims to provide much-needed regulatory reliability to businesses that want to start up or expand here in Maryland.

I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable with amendments report on House Bill 581 and look forward to working with the committee and other stakeholders in partnership on potential amendments to the bill.

Sincerely,

Saif Ratul
Deputy Legislative Officer

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