

March 6, 2024

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Room 131
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Atterbeary,

On behalf of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, representing 650 organizations with over 40,000 employees, I am writing to urge you to **oppose HB 1515, Sales and Use Tax – Rate Reduction and Services**. Now is not the time to implement yet another costly employer and consumer tax. Businesses and nonprofits continue to struggle to overcome the impact of the Covid pandemic, as well as inflation and the other policies negatively affecting the private sector that have been put in place over the past three years. Our chamber board of directors is very concerned that the implementation of HB 1515 will result in additional costs to employers and their respective customers and clients, at a time when most can least afford it.

To say that recovering from the impact of Covid and the current inflationary economic climate has had a tremendous and detrimental impact on Maryland's business sector would be an understatement. Maryland's already beleaguered small businesses continue to struggle to stay afloat and keep their doors open. A period of drawn out, anemic economic recovery and future uncertainty is not the time to implement new employer mandates that stand to negatively impact Maryland small businesses and job creators. HB 1515 will have a much more severe impact on our Washington County businesses, in particular, because of our close geographical proximity to Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia.

Lastly, while we certainly recognize the importance of education funding in the state of Maryland, but imposing taxes on everyday services should not be looked to as a solution for the reasons stated outlined above.

Respectfully, we hope we can count on you to stand up for business and consumers, and **oppose HB 1515, Sales and Use Tax – Rate Reduction and Services**.

Sincerely,



Paul Frey, IOM
President/CEO