



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

DATE: February 27, 2024
BILL NO: Senate Bill 746
BILL TITLE: Winery and Vineyard Economic Development Grant Program -
Modifications
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 746 - Winery and Vineyard Economic Development Grant Program – Modifications.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 746 removes the defined date by which an application for a Winery and Vineyard Economic Development Grant is required to be submitted to Commerce.

Background:

Chapter 358, Acts of 2022 established the Winery and Vineyard Economic Development Grant within the Department of Commerce. By statute, businesses are required to apply to Commerce by September 15 of the calendar year in which qualified expenses were incurred in order to receive a grant equal to 25% of the qualified capital costs associated with the establishment of a new winery or vineyard, or completing capital improvements at an existing winery or vineyard. Commerce is then required to review applications and alert applicants of their award by December 15 of that same calendar year.

Rationale:

This legislation would allow Commerce to determine the due date for these grant applications in order to ensure wineries and vineyards are able to apply for costs incurred through the full calendar year. In addition to allowing the ability to include a full calendar year's expenses, many winery and vineyard owners will welcome this change in application date as September is during the grape picking season when they do not have additional time and capacity to complete the application. Should this legislation pass Commerce intends to accept applications early in the calendar year for expenses incurred in the previous calendar year. The Department will then make awards in the spring before the conclusion of the fiscal year. Senate Bill 746 will improve the administration of this grant program and allow small business owners to benefit to the full extent they are eligible.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 746.