



February 27th 2026

Re: SUPPORT for House Bill 1033 — Maryland Chamber of Commerce Grant Program

Dear Chair Valderrama and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

On behalf of the Harford County Chamber of Commerce, I write to express our strong support for **House Bill 1033**, which would establish the *Maryland Chamber of Commerce Grant Program* within the Department of Social and Economic Mobility.

As a leading advocate for business growth, workforce development, and economic vitality in Harford County, the Harford Chamber believes HB 1033 is a meaningful investment in Maryland’s regional business ecosystem.

Support HB 1033:

1. Expands Access to Business Networks

Chambers of Commerce play a central role in business support, providing networking opportunities, advocacy platforms, and professional development. However, membership costs and resource constraints often limit participation by minority-owned, emerging, and small businesses. HB 1033 helps address this barrier by subsidizing membership costs for entrepreneurs and business owners who might otherwise be excluded from these critical networks.

2. Strengthens Collaboration Across Regions

The grant program enables funding for inter-chamber events and partnerships, fostering greater cooperation between chambers across Maryland. Such collaboration promotes regional economic integration, expands market access for local businesses, and amplifies collective impact on workforce issues, supply chain development, and community engagement.

3. Promotes Inclusive Economic Growth

By prioritizing support for underrepresented individuals in the business community, this legislation aligns with broader state goals of inclusive economic development. Removing financial barriers to chamber participation not only enhances equity, but also cultivates a more diverse and resilient economic landscape for Maryland.

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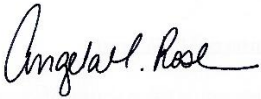
4. Modest, Strategic Investment

HB 1033's mandated appropriation — a one-time \$100,000 allocation — represents a responsible and manageable investment relative to the long-term economic return that stronger business networks deliver. Expanding chamber access and collaboration supports small business retention, job creation, and local investment throughout the state.

The Harford County Chamber of Commerce respectfully urges the Committee to support HB 1033. This bill reflects a practical and productive strategy to expand business engagement, foster broader economic opportunity, and strengthen the collective voice of Maryland's business community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela M. Rose". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

Angela M. Rose

President & CEO

Harford County Chamber of Commerce

