



## **HB 179: Department of Commerce - Complaint Portal and Annual Report**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

February 17, 2026

The Honorable Kris Valderrama, Chair  
Economic Matters Committee  
Room 230, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair  
Government, Labor, & Elections Committee  
Room 145, Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

cc: Members, House Economic Matters and Government, Labor, and Elections Committees

Chairs Valderrama and Wells, and Members of the Committees:

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on HB 179, which would require the Department of Commerce to establish a complaint portal to report delays of over 60 days in handling requests, and to report on those complaints annually.

Responsiveness in government is a critical building block for citizen trust and engagement. State agencies strive to be responsive to requests for assistance, and as the fiscal note states most state agencies respond within 60 days. But where the agency falls short that failure can cause significant impacts on the person waiting for a response; whether a business seeking a license or an individual seeking assistance with a startup.

Moreover, tracking issues where the agency did not respond in a timely manner could identify key areas where the agency is understaffed or otherwise under resourced. The annual reports would enable the legislature to work with the agency to direct funding or other resources to tackle those gaps.

Piloting a complaint portal within the Department of Commerce could be a first step towards establishing a similar portal within other agencies that are constituent serving, such as the State Department of Assessments and Taxation and the Department of Labor.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB179.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

*Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.*

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