



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Harry Coker, Jr. | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: February 19, 2026
BILL NO: Senate Bill 580
BILL TITLE: State Government - Walk-In Service Requirements
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment
POSITION: Letter of Concern

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) would like to express concerns with Senate Bill 580 - State Government - Walk-In Service Requirements.

Bill Summary:

SB 580 requires State agencies, including the Department of Commerce, to provide walk-in service to the public on a first-come, first-served basis at a reasonable frequency and at reasonable locations.

Rationale:

Commerce's concern centers around two aspects of the bill. Firstly, the bill references the Maryland Business Express (MBE) as being a program that is affiliated with or part of Commerce. The MBE is not a program, but rather a website that consolidates information from different State agencies. Although the MBE is a vital resource of State economic activity support, Commerce does not have ownership of the site, nor does the agency provide support for user benefit. Commerce staff would be unable to provide services to the general public related to the MBE, and Commerce does not anticipate a large amount of demand for in person assistance with this resource.

Secondly, Commerce does not provide services to the general public or individuals. Commerce staff provide business support in various ways, including one-on-one meetings with businesses at their preferred locations across the State. Many of the public-facing employees of the Department work in the "field" and visit the businesses they are assisting and working with at their offices. Additionally, applications for financial assistance and incentives are completed online which is the preference of the business community.

The Department occupies multiple floors of the World Trade Center-Baltimore (WTC). The WTC is not managed by Commerce. Visitors are permitted by invitation only due to security measures that are dictated by the Port Authority. Commerce would have to establish satellite offices and hire staff to fulfil the requirements of this bill. There is a concern that this would significantly increase operating expenses while offering support that is already provided through established procedures.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns as you consider Senate Bill 580.