



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 738 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – COMMISSION ON MARYLAND’S FUTURE *ALSO SB 766*

DONALD C. FRY PRESIDENT & CEO, GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

POSITION: Support w/Amendments

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of more than 500 businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 59-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability. It is an organization that prides itself on advocating for changes in public policies that strengthen the business climate while improving the quality of life.

The Greater Baltimore Committee supports (with amendments) House Bill 738 – Economic Development – Commission on Maryland’s Future.

House Bill 738 seeks to establish the Commission on Maryland’s Future. The commission would be charged with studying and developing recommendations to address the “economic renewal of Maryland” with a specific focus on strategies to address a decrease in federal defense jobs.

Maryland’s proximity to Washington, D.C. is a double-edged sword. For the most part, our relationship with the nation’s capital is a beneficial one. Many federal workers live and pay taxes in Maryland, send their children to Maryland schools and help our state continue its path of economic recovery. Maryland is home to more than fifty federal facilities and our state’s research universities enjoy hundreds of millions of federal dollars for research and development.

This proximity also makes Maryland especially susceptible to the negative consequences of a government that has been mired in gridlock.

The GBC supports the proposed commission’s charge to both identify ways to further diversify Maryland’s economy and to provide assistance to smaller firms who have an interest in pursuing new markets. However, the GBC suggests an amendment relating to the makeup of the commission.

As written, the commission would only include one representative of a nonprofit organization that is specifically involved with economic matters in the state. Nonprofit business advocacy groups oftentimes have the best understanding of the challenges facing the business community, as well as robust networks of business leaders and stakeholders. In order to ensure that the concerns of the business community are being heard and their challenges addressed, we would ask that the commission includes at least two nonprofit organizations specifically involved with economic matters in the state.

For the reasons stated above, the Greater Baltimore Committee **urges a favorable report on House Bill 738 with the amendments discussed above.**

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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