Testimony offered on behalf of:
THE GARRETT COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

UNFAVORABLE:
HB 124 – Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees - Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19

Economic Matters Committee
January 28, 2021

On behalf of the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, representing 600 member organizations in Western Maryland, I write to express our opposition to HB 124 – Occupational Safety and Health Standards to Protect Employees - Aerosol Transmissible Diseases and COVID-19.

House Bill 124 would require the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to adopt regulations that establish a permanent occupational safety and health standard to protect employees from occupational exposure to aerosol transmissible diseases, such as COVID-19.

We do not believe that additional regulations are needed for transmissible diseases. All employers want to provide a safe environment for the workers but this legislation is unwarranted. Most have made good faith efforts to following CDC and Maryland guidance to implement safety protocols during the pandemic. Requiring a comprehensive infectious disease exposure control plan to be created and implemented by employers is onerous and unnecessary.

Additionally, the Chamber has been made aware that there is an effort under way at the federal level to address many of the issues outlined in this bill. As well, there are a number of other pieces of legislation making their way through the state legislative process, including the comprehensive Essential Worker Protection Act (HB 581), that address workplace safety regulations. Because of the complexity of this issue, and its intersection with federal law, the Chamber looks forward to working with stakeholders on policy outcomes that balance employee protections with the operational realities of our members.

The Chamber respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE committee report on HB 124.

Sincerely,
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