

Testimony of Sharon Moore Jackson
President, S.M. Jackson Government Business Solutions, LLC
Before the Maryland State Environment and Transportation Committee
Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Thank you Chair Kuman P. Barve, Vice Chair Dana M. Stein and members of this committee for allowing me to provide written testimony in favor of H.B. 313 Public Private Partnerships - Minority Business Enterprise Program.

My name is Sharon Moore Jackson. I am the President of S.M. Jackson Government Business Solutions, a Maryland-based, small, minority and woman owned consulting business who specializes in diversity, inclusion and compliance. I am also Vice Chair of the Bi-County Business Roundtable, a regional advocacy organization representing businesses throughout the State of Maryland. Delegate Darryl Barnes is the Founder and President.

I have over 30+ years of real and substantial experience in the MBE arena and with that understanding and passion, I launched my consulting firm in 2017, after retiring from the State of Maryland in 2016. To give you a little background on my experience, I began working in the MBE field in 1975, in the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) (aka, Governor's Office of Minority Affairs (GOMA)). In 1980 OMBE transitioned to the Executive Department as GOMA. I have served as MBE Administrator, Special Assistant, Outreach Manager, Deputy Director, Acting Executive Director, for Maryland Department of Human Resources, Prince George's Board of Education, and Prince George's County Supplier Diversity and Diversity Division, in both management and leadership positions, advocating on behalf of minority businesses. Over the past 40 years, I have seen significant changes to the MBE Program, one that stands out for me was the expansion for opportunities for MBE's in the Brokerage and Investment Management of firms by the State Retirement System, Injured Workers' Insurance Fund, Maryland Automobile Insurance Fund and the State Treasurer's Office. Substantial participation by MBEs and the State's equity procurements were realized. In addition, the opportunities created in that industry, which has been historically closed to women and ethnic minorities, has heighten the State of Maryland's reputation as a trailblazer in the MBE arena. Passage of H.B. 313 will do the same.

Minority and small businesses are a driving force in our economy. The passage of H.B. 313, ensures increased opportunities to MBEs for continued growth and sustainability. That translates to an increased tax base and everyone benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written statement. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Sharon@smjgovbizsolutions.com