



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Maryland Correctional Enterprises

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MARYLAND CORRECTIONAL
ENTERPRISES

STEPHEN SANDERS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BILLS: HB 592 - State Vehicle Fleet - Conversion to Zero-Emission Electric Vehicles

DATE: January 21, 2021

POSITION: **Oppose**

The passage of House Bill 592 has the potential to affect the operation of Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) and may increase inmate idleness.

Maryland Correctional Enterprises is the prison industry arm of the Division of Correction within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). The mission of MCE focuses on providing structured employment and training activities to enhance offender rehabilitation. In conjunction with our mission, MCE is responsible for maintaining compliance with the following mandates:

- Is financially self-supporting, generates revenue for its operations and capital investments
- Provides meaningful work experiences for inmates that are intended to allow inmates to improve work habits, attitudes, and skills for the purpose of improving the employability of the inmates upon release
- Seeks to develop industries that provide full-time work experience or rehabilitation programs for all eligible inmates, and
- Operates correctional industries in an environment that resembles as closely as possible the environment of private sector business operations

Due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY20 the fiscal data for FY20 is not an accurate representation of typical MCE revenues and employment statistics. As a result, MCE is providing FY19 data. During FY19 MCE generated in excess of \$52 million in revenues and employed over 1,500 inmates at fiscal year-end. The current MCE organization consists of 26 business units located at 10 state correctional facilities. MCE business units are located in Cumberland, Hagerstown, Sykesville, Jessup, and Westover. MCE utilizes maximum, medium, minimum, pre-release and work-release inmates.

MCE offers a wide array of products and services. Major product lines include meat products, furniture and furniture restoration, printing / signage, textiles, laundry services, and license plates. The majority of these services require delivery provided by MCE's diesel-fueled, tractor-trailer fleet. The passage of HB 592 would potentially eliminate our ability to purchase diesel-fueled fleet. In addition, MCE would see an increase in expenditures, which may have an impact on our self-supporting status. In turn, this could result in the closure of business units and a decrease in the number of inmates that we employ.

Studies across the nation continue to show that involvement in a correctional industry program has a positive effect on reducing states' recidivism rates. MCE products and services

maintain a “value added” component through manufacturing, assembly, warehousing, various services, clerical / computer skills, etc. As our work progresses, it has become evident that training and education in these areas have become vital to inmates’ successes upon release. Higher recidivism rates result in decreased public safety and incarceration costs on both state and local levels.

A strong and vibrant MCE is in the best interest of the state. In addition to reducing recidivism, reducing inmate idleness, enhancing public / community safety and providing inmates with much needed work skills and work ethics, MCE has also transferred over \$16 million dollars to the State’s General Fund since Fiscal Year 2002.

We respectfully request that you give House Bill 592 an **unfavorable** vote. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Catherine Kahl at 410-260-6074.