



Peter Franchot
Comptroller

TESTIMONY OF COMPTROLLER PETER FRANCHOT

Support - House Bill 800 - Public Safety - Emergency Management - Price Gouging Consumer Protections

Economic Matters Committee

February 16, 2022

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to provide testimony in **support** of **House Bill 800 - Public Safety - Emergency Management - Price Gouging Consumer Protections**. I would like to thank Delegate Queen for sponsoring this important legislation, and the Committee for providing the opportunity for my testimony to be heard.

The COVID-19 pandemic produced many challenges for everyday consumers. Initially, some began purchasing more essential products than usual in anticipation of an extended stay at home and the inability to make frequent trips to the store for supplies. This led to retailers selling through their stock, and eventually some steep increases in the price of goods, and even exploitative reselling at a large markup. House Bill 800 is designed to prevent price gouging when a state of emergency is in effect by restricting price increases on essential goods to less than ten percent of pre-emergency prices.

House Bill 800 would work to keep prices reasonable for the most necessary goods and services such as food, medicine, and cleaning supplies. It is critical to the well-being and independence of everyday Marylanders that this commonsense restriction is put in place during extreme circumstances.

For the reasons stated above, and the protection of all Marylanders, I respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 800. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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