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Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Applauds Increase to Local Small Business Reserve Program, Calls for Reexamination of Contract Exclusions

ROCKVILLE, MD – The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce announced today support for County Council bill 3-09, which makes amendments to the County’s Local Small Business Reserve Program (LSBRP) which was created in 2005. Bill 3-09 is a part of County Executive Leggett’s economic stimulus package that he announced in December as a way to aid our local business community. The legislation, if passed by the County Council, would amend the current law by increasing from 10 percent to 20 percent the amount of eligible contract dollars that County departments would be required to spend with local small businesses.

While announcing support of the bill, the Chamber also called for the Council to reexamine the exclusions set forth by bill which prevent many local small businesses from being eligible to bid on contracts. Judy Stephenson, President of OfficePro and a member of the Chamber’s Small Business and Legislative Committees, testified on behalf of the Chamber.

“We applaud the intent of this legislation and believe that the County Executive is correct to suggest that an important way to stimulate the economy is to require government to contract with more local small businesses,” testified Stephenson. “However, we also believe that the contract restrictions and exclusions within the program place significant constraints on the ability of the County to spend real, significant dollars with our local small businesses.”

Other local small business owners agreed with Stephenson. “I have been involved with this important legislation from its inception and encourage the Council to examine some of the current contract exclusions,” said Charles H. Atwell, President, Innovative Business Interiors, Inc. and Co-Chair of the Chamber’s Small Business Committee. “The expansion from 10% to 20% is an important step in the right direction, however, 20% of “eligible contracts” may still represent a very small dollar amount.”

“The Chamber supports County Executive Leggett’s call for an increase to this program,” Georgette “Gigi” Godwin, President and CEO of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce adds. “We look forward to working with the Council to pass this bill and make other important changes to ensure the future success of our local small business community.”

About the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce serves its business membership by providing members with the opportunity to connect with one another and by advocating for an improved local and Maryland-wide business climate through effective legislation and policy.

The Chamber has more than 600 business members, ranging from Fortune 500 multinationals to sole proprietorships. The current Chairman of the Board is Dr. James Whang, President and CEO of defense contractor AEPLOG For more information about the Chamber, visit <http://www.montgomerycountychamber.com>.