



OUR MISSION:

Working to enhance the economic prosperity of greater Silver Spring through robust promotion of our member businesses and unrelenting advocacy on their behalf.

April 2, 2024

The Honorable Andrew Friedson  
and Members of the Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue, Sixth Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Friedson and Members of the Council:

On behalf of the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 300 employers, mostly small businesses and non-profit organizations in greater Silver Spring and surrounding areas in Montgomery County, we would like to ask the Council to support the JOBS initiative that Council President Friedson proposed. We would, once again, like to thank the Council for recognizing the overall importance of economic development and investing in jobs. A \$20 million commitment to growing 1,000 jobs will pay dividends long into our county's future. We also believe that promoting commerce and economic development is the job of everyone. Respectfully understanding some reservation about the timing of this proposal, the Chamber will piggyback on the "if not now, then when" mantra.

I would like to get a bit more specific about what this initiative can do for Silver Spring. The Chamber has always been about making greater Silver Spring a thriving business community, a place where people want to live, work, and come to enjoy what so many of us love about Silver Spring – our wonderful arts and entertainment venues, our breweries, our diverse restaurants, and our outdoor gathering spaces.

Silver Spring, like other communities in our County, has faced challenges to its economy brought on by the pandemic and the subsequent changes in our workforce habits. A lack of boots on the ground, the closing of businesses, and the loss of jobs has hurt our local businesses and our general economy. The mission of the Silver Spring Chamber is to widen opportunities by growing jobs and businesses to increase prosperity for all of our residents and the JOBS Initiative is just what is needed.

A major challenge we continue to face is the high vacancies in our downtown office markets. Attracting new companies and fostering business expansion for our existing companies is vitally important and the JOBS initiative will help jumpstart local economies, like Silver Spring, with new high-paying jobs and help to revitalize our downtown.

The special emphasis on the County's Equity Focus Areas will definitely benefit Silver Spring by giving a boost to our small businesses and enticing entrepreneurs and innovators to call Silver Spring home.

In summation, the Chamber wants all businesses to succeed. And we believe that this initiative begins to address some of the challenges faced by Silver Spring businesses. Business growth and development is ultimately the key to a thriving community, a thriving Silver Spring, a thriving County, and a thriving Maryland. This is one more step that allows Silver Spring to take its rightful place as a business and residential hub, and economic engine in Montgomery County for those who live here, who work here, and who come here to enjoy the wonderful amenities we have to offer. Thank you to the Council for understanding this and taking action to address it.

The Chamber agrees with Council President Friedson's statement that with this initiative "Montgomery County is open to business and Montgomery County is open for business."

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We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this and look forward to working hand in hand with the Council and the MCEDC on this initiative.

Should you have questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie M. Helsing".

Stephanie Helsing  
President & CEO  
Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce

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