

MARYLAND PIRG TESTIMONY

My name is Carly Mercer, and I am an Associate with Maryland PIRG, the statewide consumer advocacy group. As an organization, we seek to achieve meaningful reforms to benefit Maryland's citizens, even when it means standing up to powerful special interests.

We are calling on the Commission to recommend combined reporting and make sure that corporations that do business in Maryland contribute to the services and structures that enable them to thrive in our state.

Today we submitted a petition, signed by 270 Maryland citizens, urging the Commission to recommend combined reporting. They are calling for a tax code that holds corporations accountable for contributing to the structures they use in Maryland- a tax code that doesn't force families and small businesses to foot the bill for corporate tax avoidance.

Corporate tax loopholes allow large corporations to dodge the same taxes Maryland residents and families have to pay every year to support Maryland's public structures- its great schools, roads, and health services. Multi-state corporations that take advantage of these loopholes are able to reap the benefits of Maryland's infrastructure without fully paying to support it. Their employees are educated in Maryland's schools and universities, and their vehicles use the roads to run their businesses efficiently. We need to make sure that, like Maryland citizens and companies, multi-state corporations contribute towards the public structures they use. These loopholes rob our vital public structures, our roads and schools and healthcare programs, of needed funds, forcing cuts and straining the budget.

Maryland's public structures are a major draw for the area. These structures help big corporations do business in Maryland, facilitating their operations and benefitting their workforce. It only makes sense that these companies should pay their share of taxes to keep our infrastructure strong and running smoothly.

Reducing the tax base hurts Maryland families and businesses that depend on our strong infrastructure- programs to protect our environment, like Bay cleanup, and education funding are at risk of being squeezed by the budget deficit. Siphoning money away from key programs that make Maryland a better place to live is not conducive to economic growth, nor will it make these programs a draw for the community. Ensuring that corporations help fund Maryland's infrastructure is the right thing to do.

Corporations' profits have rebounded to pre-recession levels, but Maryland citizens are struggling, and don't have the option to use loopholes and avoid taxes. They can't set up a subsidiary organization and hide their profits out of state. If they are a resident of Maryland and work in Virginia, they will still be taxed for 100% of their income in Maryland, while some corporations that effectively operate in a similar manner can avoid their state taxes. Maryland's leaders should protect the interests of its people by making the tax code fair across the board- families and households shouldn't have to shoulder the increased tax burden exacerbated by funds lost to loopholes.

Each year, Maryland struggles with rising needs and declining resources to meet those needs, and we've seen painful cuts to health and higher education. If we let corporations off the hook, we will see more and more of these painful cuts, undermining the infrastructure that helps Maryland grow. Multi-state companies will continue to exploit the advantages afforded by tax loopholes, forcing Maryland families and local businesses to pay more.

Combined reporting is good government. It will contribute needed funds to our valuable public structures and is a more transparent way of taxing multi-state companies. We need to maintain our local businesses, our roads, and our schools in order for Maryland to continue to grow and continue to be a great place to live and work. Maryland PIRG, along with the 270 individuals on this petition, urges you to consider the interests of Maryland's hard-working families and small businesses, and recommend combined reporting. Thank you.

Dear Commissioners,

Large corporations should not be able to avoid their fair share of taxes, leaving families and small businesses to pay for vital public services.

We the undersigned urge you to recommend combined reporting to close corporate tax loopholes and make Maryland's tax code fair for all.

Sincerely,

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