



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

WILL ANDERSON, *Director*
Department of Economic and
Workforce Development

BILL NO.: SB 0826

TITLE: Economic Development - Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

SPONSOR: Senator Cory V. McCray

COMMITTEE: Finance

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 3, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 0826 – Economic Development - Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program. This bill encourages the establishment and expansion of makerspaces throughout the State by awarding financial assistance to designees of certain government and non-profit entities to support the development of these innovative learning spaces in local jurisdictions.

The Baltimore region is fortunate to have a model makerspace in the city – Open Works. Innovation spaces like these are essential for entrepreneurship and skill development, and are particularly effective in galvanizing and strengthening the communities where they are located. Open Works has been highly successful, accounting for \$8.5 million in economic impact on a combined state and local level in its first three years of operation. The space supports more than 55 small businesses and supports 118 jobs, when factoring in both employees who work at the space and the members who use its micro-studios and use its tools.¹

Leveraging these funds and technical assistance resources would allow local counties to:

- Replicate the makerspace concept in our local communities, expanding opportunities for occupational, apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training for all.
- Build upon our highly-skilled workforce to meet projected industry demand in the skilled trades.
- Create community-centered hubs that strengthen our neighborhoods and foster a safe environment for mentoring, learning, and social engagement.

SB 0826 would allow this makerspace model to be shared and adapted to unique opportunities in different local economies. Accordingly, Baltimore County requests **FAVORABLE** report on SB 0826. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Anderson", is written over a horizontal line.

Will Anderson
Director, Economic and Workforce Development

¹ [“Turning Makerspaces into Greater Places”](#) – Technical.ly, September 11, 2019