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**NATION OF
MAKERS**

Statement of Support by Nation of Makers

SB0453 - Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

Senate Finance Committee Hearing date: February 15th, 2022, 1 PM

Nation of Makers is a national nonprofit, located in Silver Spring, MD, committed to supporting America's maker organizations through community building, resource sharing, and advocacy. Much of the work we do takes place locally, on the state and regional level, supporting local maker organizations and ecosystems to enhance the impact of the maker movement nationally. Our Nation of Makers' Champions program identifies local leaders who are championing the maker movement in their region, and supports them as they foster a local ecosystem that not only furthers the maker movement, but also the economic, social, and cultural impact that maker organizations have on the local economy. In support of our mission, we are proud to partner with local maker organizations, such as Open Works, who are having a significant economic/social/cultural impact within their community, to create opportunities for all Americans to succeed through making where they live.

Open Works, in particular, has quickly grown into a national leader in the maker movement. This impactful makerspace has set a new precedent for the ability of makerspaces to deliver economic impact, diversified a field that has historically low representation of ethnic and racial minorities and women, and delivered high-quality educational programming in fabrication, design, and entrepreneurship to learners of all ages and backgrounds in Maryland. In a field with limited documented best practices, Open Works has developed a valuable set of operational competencies that can help other municipalities in Maryland derive similar economic, social, and educational benefits from the makerspaces within their community.

Additionally, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Open Works has demonstrated the tremendous capacity and value of local makerspaces to serve their communities. Facing unprecedented medical supply shortages, Maryland found itself in a similar situation as the rest of the United States. Makers, makerspaces, and maker groups responded across the country to fill critical supply

shortages and to provide PPE for healthcare and essential workers, and our most vulnerable communities in need - producing and distributing over 37 million units of medical supplies domestically within the United States. I'm proud to report that, as a part of this incredible effort, Open Works, through its Makers Unite program, produced 28,270 face shields over 55 days for over 100 Maryland clients, from local hospitals to federal agencies.

The proposed legislation creates a non-lapsing fund to be administered by TEDCO that would support the expansion and establishment of further makerspaces in the State of Maryland, significantly scaling the current impacts of Open Works' current location. This legislation will help other new organizations increase their ability to deliver high-quality just-in-time services to communities in need, quickly scale their audience, and produce sustainable, grassroots economic growth. Furthermore, this bill will help ensure the financial viability of public-facing makerspaces in Maryland by providing operational support that can be leveraged for greater growth, productivity, and private fundraising. In particular, creating a network of five locations could have the following impacts:

Economic Impact

- In 2019, state and local tax revenues generated by Open Works and associated businesses topped \$450,000.
- Five locations could produce \$45M in annual economic impact, \$2.25M in annual tax revenues, and 600 jobs through direct employment and startup creation.

Educational Impact

- In 2019, Open Works enrolled 1,339 adults and 171 youth in technical education classes.
- 5 locations could educate 6,700 adults and 850 youth annually.

Impact on Emergency Resilience

- Based on Open Works' experience with *Makers Unite*, Open Works could organize a civil manufacturing reserve to provide supply chain resilience in case of natural disaster, terror attack, or pandemic.

Impact on Workforce Development

- In late 2021, Open Works was awarded \$223,000 from the City of Baltimore to run a two-year apprenticeship program for industrial sewing machine operators.
- 5 locations could provide the scale to address the diverse workforce needs of manufacturers and tech companies across the state and better compete with Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., and Virginia.

We are proud of the work that Open Works is doing within the great state of Maryland, and we are excited for the promise of SB0453 and the positive economic impact it will have on the entire state. Constructing a makerspace network would immediately catapult Maryland into a national leadership role in cultivating an innovation economy, and have profound implications on the next 25 years of economic growth, workforce development, STEM educational excellence, disaster preparedness, and startup activity. For these reasons, Nation of Makers encourages a favorable vote on SB0453.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Jones-Davis', with a large initial 'D' and a long, flowing tail.

Dorothy Jones-Davis, PhD
Executive Director, Nation of Makers