

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 304
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3671 • 301-858-3671
800-492-7122 Ext. 3671
KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB 816 – Economic Development – Cyber Maryland Program – Alterations

February 27, 2024

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of SB816, which seeks to alter certain aspects of the Cyber Maryland Program and the Cyber Maryland Fund.

There is a critical shortage of cyber workers in the state. Last year, we passed SB801, which established the Cyber Maryland Program to develop a cybersecurity talent pipeline, serve as a hub for State workforce development programs in cybersecurity, and coordinate cybersecurity, research, and innovation in the state.

That legislation also established the Maryland Technology Development Corporation's (TEDCO) management of the Cyber Maryland Fund. SB816 serves as a technical clean up bill, put forward at the request of TEDCO, to change several administrative staffing requirements that have impacted management efficiency. Adjusting these staffing requirements, including several other minor changes within the bill, will increase staffing flexibility and administrative cost savings. Specifically, this bill:

- Transfers the management of the Cyber Maryland Fund from the Cyber Maryland Board to TEDCO.
- Changes the fund's use eligibility to cover administrative expenses, including staff, consultants, and other professional needs to implement, maintain, and administer the Cyber Maryland Program and Fund.
- Allows TEDCO to award grants through the fund.

These adjustments make the administration of the Cyber Maryland program more consistent with the other programs that TEDCO manages and streamline the statute language to achieve the same goal.

As the current structure of the program impacts the efficiency of its management, this simple change will save costs and increase staffing flexibility, thereby aiding our efforts to fill the 30,000 cyber job vacancies in the State.

Lastly, I have submitted an amendment to this bill to reappropriate \$250,000 for Talent Pipeline Management within the Cyber Maryland Fund, which was inadvertently cut from the budget and remains mission critical.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB816.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Montgomery Counties