



Greater Hagerstown Committee

February 14, 2025

The Honorable Guy J. Guzzone
Chairman, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB-698 - Washington County - Sales and Use Tax Exemption - Target Redevelopment Area

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

I am writing to express our strong support for SB-698, a crucial bill that would provide a Sales and Use Tax exemption within the Mt. Aetna Technology Park (MATH) of Hagerstown. This legislation will be instrumental in helping our community market an area originally purchased nearly 20 years ago by our local industrial foundation, CHIEF, with the intention of fostering high-tech development.

GHC is a nonprofit organization of over 100 corporate executives and community leaders dedicated to improving the quality of life in Washington County. Our member companies employ more than 10,000 individuals in the region. For over 35 years, GHC has collaborated with public officials and community stakeholders to advance initiatives that enhance our community and foster economic growth. This includes our ongoing support for projects like MATH.

MATH spans approximately 150 acres of prime real estate, strategically located between the Meritus Medical Campus, the new Meritus Medical School, and Hagerstown Community College, which houses our local business incubator. Over the last 15 years, CHIEF has worked with local, state, and federal partners to develop the necessary infrastructure for this site, including the completion of Yale Drive in 2016 and Professional Blvd Phase 2 last year. These infrastructure improvements have created multiple pad-ready sites, supported by robust utilities, including water, sewer, electricity, cellular, and fiber networks.

Diversifying our local economy has long been a cornerstone of our county's economic development strategy. Our region has successfully attracted a range of industries, including retail, manufacturing, financial services, logistics, and defense. However, as the cost of living rises, we face a shortage of higher-paying jobs in advanced technical fields. High-tech industries, such as biosciences, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing, tend to cluster in established hubs, which presents a challenge in attracting them to new locations. Despite several inquiries over the years, we have yet to secure a high-tech anchor company for MATH.

The proposed Sales and Use Tax exemption would provide a critical economic incentive to help attract these targeted industries to MATH. By securing an anchor company, we are confident that other high-tech businesses will follow, further enhancing our region's economic landscape.

We respectfully request your support of SB-698 to help us advance our efforts to diversify and strengthen our local economy. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jim Kercheval, Executive Director

The Greater Hagerstown Committee, Inc.

Email: jkercheval@greaterhagerstown.org

Phone: 301.733.8811 (office) or 301.992.7515 (mobile)

