Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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TO: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Department of Labor
DATE: March 6th, 2025
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

MD LABOR POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

The Maryland Department of Labor ("MD Labor" or "the Department") supports many of the provisions in SB 867 and believes that they will make a meaningful and necessary contribution to strengthening the Cyber Maryland Program ("the Program"). However, it is critical that any approach to the implementation of the Program is coordinated with our partners.

MD Labor appreciates Senator Hester's continued leadership in shaping Maryland's cybersecurity strategy and guiding the future of the Program, which was originally established through her legislation in 2023 (SB801). Thanks to that legislation, TEDCO/Cyber Maryland and the Governor's Workforce Development Board collaborated on a report and are now advancing a statewide strategic plan for cybersecurity workforce development ("the Talent Strategy").

The Program is now transitioning from an incubation phase to an execution phase, where it will move from strategy to action. Transferring the program to MD Labor at this critical juncture will harness the Department's expertise and infrastructure to bring the strategy's ambitious goals to life.

MD Labor has proposed its own legislation this session (SB 241 and HB82) that seeks to move the Program to the Department, and Governor Moore's budget proposes key investments both via General Funds and the State Reserve Fund Dedicated Purpose Account (titled "Cyber Workforce Grants") in order to jumpstart the work of the program.

SB 867 transfers the Program from TEDCO to MD Labor and clarifies the Program's purposes, goals, and Cyber Maryland Fund ("the Fund") usage. The bill expands eligibility for applicants, facilitates grant awards, ensures adequate staffing to manage the Fund, and establishes an annual reporting requirement to promote transparency and accountability.

MD Labor recognizes the need for a significant investment in the Program to build a cyber workforce that can meet growing demand. **However, in this uncertain**

budget climate, the Department recommends a more flexible approach to funding allocation.

As written, the bill designates specific dollar amounts to eight strategies. While MD Labor appreciates that many of these strategies align with the Talent Strategy recommendations, strict allocation at this level of detail may limit the Program's ability to adapt to industry needs, emerging opportunities, and budget realities. To ensure long-term success, MD Labor suggests enumerating these priorities within a broader, dedicated funding framework, allowing for strategic adjustments while still advancing the Program's core objectives.

Similarly, while MD Labor actively seeks funding to expand resources for businesses and jobseekers, the Department has concerns about a mandate requiring the securement of a specific level of non-state resources. Instead, MD Labor recommends revising the language to emphasize the directive rather than explicitly requiring a doubling of funds.

The bill proposes transferring unspent funds from certain programs and funds to the Program at the end of each fiscal year. This approach creates an inconsistent funding mechanism that may not provide predictable resources for the Program. It also diverts funds from other critical workforce development initiatives and includes programs that are not specific line items in the budget (e.g., Registered Apprenticeships in Cybersecurity). Moreover, since this provision impacts programs beyond MD Labor's scope, it would require input from additional agencies.

Finally, the bill contains language requiring grants and contracts for Information Technology or Operational Technology. MD Labor understands this as an effort to expand cybersecurity workforce development into other relevant technologies, rather than using state funds to procure the technology itself. This could be clarified with language indicating that grants and contracts are meant to support workforce development in cybersecurity-related technologies including informational technology, operational technology, and other emerging technologies.

MD Labor appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on and amendments to Senate Bill 867 and looks forward to working with stakeholders to strengthen the Program.

For questions, please contact Caroline Bauk, at **Caroline.Bauk@maryland.gov**.