

March 5, 2020

House Economic Matters Committee

Dear Delegate:

I am writing today **in favor of HB 1426 “Economic Development – Advanced Clean Energy and Clean Energy Innovation Investments and Initiatives.”**

I am personally invested in growing Maryland’s high tech economy. I grew up in Baltimore City and went to the public schools. I obtained my PhD in Physics from the University of Maryland, and while I was a graduate student, I founded an advanced materials company called Pixelligent Technologies that is currently based in Baltimore City.

Over the last several years I have been a reviewer for the Maryland Innovation Initiative technology commercialization grant program at TEDCO and have reviewed dozens of high-quality proposals for the development of exciting technologies from professors within Maryland Universities. These technologies have the potential to benefit Maryland in a number of ways, including by creating profitable companies that employ high and mid-wage workers. Unfortunately, many of the professors that are creating these technologies lack the skills and time to build viable businesses and currently there are not good mechanisms to match them to entrepreneurs who have the right skills.

The Maryland Clean Energy Center recently launched its Maryland Energy Innovation Accelerator Program. MEIA pairs entrepreneurs with professors that have created promising energy related technologies. I am currently volunteering as an energy executive and I have been matched to two faculty members within the University of Maryland. Given the size and complexity of the University system, this kind of guided matchmaking and help with navigating within the Universities is extremely valuable. I am now working with these faculty inventors on creating company business plans and will be pitching to potential seed stage investors in June. I joined MEIA with the goal of becoming an executive leader at one of these companies.

MEIA is currently a pilot program for MCEC that is not funded by its current budget. HB1426 makes this program permanent and enhances it by enabling more coordination with the Maryland Energy Innovation Institute and TEDCO. Having been involved in the technology entrepreneurship in Maryland over the last 20 years, I have seen the growth in support for entrepreneurship and am in full support of those efforts. There is still significant untapped potential and MEIA fulfills an unmet, urgent need around skilled matchmaking and business plan development. I am confident that continuing to develop the support system for entrepreneurship within Maryland will pay big dividends for the state. In addition, many of these technologies have the potential to address important problems faced by our society including climate change.

I urge you to support HB1426.

Sincerely,



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