




Pramod Raheja

CEO & Co-Founder

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March 1st, 2021

Members of the House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building Room 121
6 Bladen Street,
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 1512

Stance: Support

Madam Chairman, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pramod Raheja and I am the CEO-Co-Founder of Airgility, we are an early-stage technology company focused on AI & autonomy founded three years ago in and based in College Park, MD. Starting a company such as ours that works at the highest intersection of deep technology & innovation is not an easy endeavor. Without the resources & programs that the state of Maryland and University of Maryland have to offer, I don't think we would still be around. While many successful innovative technology companies leave the state, we are on a path for long term success and growth that is a win-win for everyone including the State of Maryland.

One of these programs that has been a great help has been the Maryland Technology Internship Program (MTIP). We have been working with MTIP since the Spring of 2020 and in that time MTIP has supported 18 interns and Airgility has converted 5 interns to full time hires including two who are currently supervising interns. Airgility's Industry Investment in internship program has been \$50,000 and MTIP's financial support of Airgility has been \$24,000, a huge help for any small, growing company.

MTIP allows us to give opportunities to students across a range of disciplines, these include Aerospace, mechanical, electrical, robotics, AI & computer engineering, computer science and sales enablement and digital marketing. We have converted five of our Interns to full-time Hires. MTIP has been a direct pathway for a technology-based business such as ours to recruit student interns with strong skills in our innovation focused world (and keep them in MD!).

We need direct pathways for technology-based businesses to recruit student interns with strong skills in our innovation-focused world. There are many challenges with recruiting technical talent and this tax credit would incentivize employers to retain their entry level talent. By expanding MTIP and creating the Maryland Internship Opportunities Program, employers will be provided with the opportunity to hire talent from all fields.

HB1215 expands access to experiential learning opportunities for students and supports technology-based businesses across the state of Maryland. It provides a true pathway to hire and retain the next generation of talent for the state of Maryland. Please support HB1215.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pramod B Raheja".

Pramod B Raheja
CEO/Co-Founder, Airgility