



ALLEGANY COUNTY, MARYLAND

The Board of County Commissioners

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January 28, 2021

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairwoman Kaiser:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners of Allegany County to voice our support for **HB 443: Economic Development – Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program**. The bill will allocate much-needed funding to the Western Maryland Works program we started in 2018 in collaboration with Allegany College of Maryland. Since that time, the College has outfitted the makerspace for advanced manufacturing, industrial maintenance, welding, and other specialty training programs. The space offers unmatched resources for job training and career preparation that bolster the county's student retention rates. Allegany County is proud to operate this space with the Allegany College of Maryland, who has long been a strong community partner.

The proposed appropriation will assist our educators, students, and others during an economically devastating time for our state. Employment rates in Allegany County have been hit particularly hard during the Covid-19 pandemic. Without the makerspace program and its funding, access to such advanced training would be unavailable to our community. For the advancement of our residential students and workforce, we are respectfully requesting the Committee's **FAVORABLE** consideration of the bill.

Sincerely,

Jacob C. Shade, President
Allegany County Board of County Commissioners