

Mr. John Beatty Testimony
Executive Director – Massachusetts Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force
On House Bill 98 before the Maryland House of Delegates
Appropriations Committee
25 January 2022

I submit this testimony in support of House bill 98. The legislation pending before this Committee is similar to legislation that was passed in Massachusetts in 2014. The intent of the legislation was to give the Commonwealth of Massachusetts tools to address the needs of its various military installations whether it was workforce development to actual infrastructure improvements. Under what is known as the “Massachusetts Military Bond bill”, I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force (MASS-TF). The MASS-TF allows for various partnerships, mission enhancement, and cost reduction opportunities. I act as a liaison between the Commonwealth and community leaders to keep them aligned in highlighting installation activities in both Massachusetts and Washington.

The Massachusetts military bond bill provided the Commonwealth with an important tool to support our various military installations. Then Governor Deval Patrick understood that the Commonwealth needed to be a proactive partner to address a range of issues. The Commonwealth was being proactive to ensure that if there were any future base realignment and closure rounds (BRAC) that they were not in a bad position like previous rounds but addressing the myriad infrastructure and workforce challenges.

The creation of the MASS TF and utilization of the bond bill has helped the Commonwealth to protect current missions and be aggressive in going after new missions at the various installations across the state. For example, through the Massachusetts bond bill, we successfully made runway improvements through a \$9 million bond. We utilized bond bill funds to create the HEROES Program at UML to promote the U.S. Warfighter’s innovation and effectiveness through a \$125,000 bond. Bond bill funds were also used to support workforce training efforts at UMass-Lowell specifically to address critical needs for the acquisition workforce at Hanscom Air Force Base. Funds were also used to address renewable and resilient energy projects at communities with military installations.

The flexibility of the bond bill funding affords the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with an important tool to support local communities, partners and innovators to increase the strategic value of the military bases. The funds have been used to improve the quality of life for personnel and address infrastructure challenges that help the Commonwealth go after new missions. The Department of Defense has made clear to communities across the country that having military installation is not a right or guarantee and that they need states and local communities to step up and help them address myriad issues facing our military personnel. A military bond bill legislation is a very useful tool to be proactive in addressing these challenges.

I applaud Delegate Crosby for introducing this legislation and modeling it off the military bond bill in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. House bill 98 will give the State of Maryland an important tool to partner with and address issues raised by the Department of Defense. The military installations in Maryland will benefit from this legislation and it will help the leadership of the State address any issues should there be a future BRAC round. If this bill is passed in the Maryland legislature, it will be the second of its kind in the United States.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.