

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 549**  
**Economic Development – Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program and Fund**  
**(Innovation Economy Infrastructure Act of 2023)**

The University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB), offers this letter in support of SB549. UMB is the state's academic medical center campus with six professional schools, spinning out ten new startups each year based on university faculty intellectual property. As part of our commercialization and investment activities, UMB and our colleagues at UMCP routinely support and work with many entities in the sectors defined in this legislation to grow and expand in Maryland. We understand the unique infrastructure and educational needs of technology-based companies as well as their high economic impact in the State. The majority of these companies operate with very little expendable income in the earliest years but tend to grow exponentially with high dividends to the State once they hit certain inflection points in their commercialization pathway. Fostering the creation of wet laboratories, prototype manufacturing centers, and other infrastructure improvements is critical to the long-term growth and stability of emerging technology firms and will greatly benefit Maryland's economy and competitiveness.

Currently, and for the past several years, there has been almost zero wet lab inventory available in Baltimore, despite a strong and growing life science industry. Both UMB and Johns Hopkins University spin out highly promising companies each year, but a persistent lack of private wet laboratory space in Baltimore and the region hinders expansion. Although the UM BioPark has recently announced a new laboratory building that will provide 250,000 square feet of office, lab and gathering space, this will not fulfill the existing demand in the region.

A lack of available space is not the only hurdle for companies. Once they acquire space, most companies have to invest in improvements to customize leased space to meet their needs. Specialized laboratory facilities are difficult for early-stage companies to finance but are critical for their ultimate growth and success. A matching grant program, such as the one proposed, could assist by providing grants for entities, such as UMB and the BioPark, to build out shared laboratories that provide specialized facilities and equipment for early-stage companies. The grant could also provide much-needed financial support for companies emerging from our State universities to continue their growth in Maryland.

The matching component in SB549 demonstrates Maryland's commitment to support these critical projects while encouraging investment in the state. This is often a critical component of leveraging private investment into large projects.

We believe SB549 2 provides a much-needed resource to enable the Department of Commerce to leverage funds and support the growth the profitable technology sector in Maryland.

Sincerely,



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Chief Government Affairs Officer/VP