

March 14, 2023

The Honorable James “Jim” Rosapepe  
Vice Chair  
Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
James Senate Office Building, Room 101  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for SB0906 “Economic Development - Industry 4.0 Technology Grant Program”

Dear Vice Chair Rosapepe,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Greater Washington Board of Trade to encourage support for SB0906. The Greater Washington Board of Trade is a pro-business and non-partisan organization supporting all industry sectors in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia, having done so for the last 134 years.

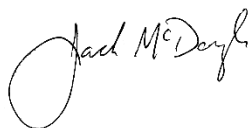
In order for the National Capital Region to continue to grow and progress, businesses need to be able to adapt to an ever-changing environment. This is only possible if they have the resources needed to do so, as it can be a rather capital-intensive process. The manufacturing sector is currently experiencing a rapid transformation, as the need to incorporate advanced technologies in their production process shifts from optional to mandatory if they wish to remain in business. The changes required, often referred to as Industry 4.0 technologies, come with considerable up-front costs that many small and medium-sized (SME) manufacturers cannot afford.

This legislation, SB0906, would provide the financial resources through matching grants that SME manufacturers need to remain competitive. With these resources, the manufacturers could produce new and complex products more efficiently with their skilled and well-paid workforce. With the manufacturing sector expected to create 14,000 new jobs in Maryland alone over the next ten years, there remains an excellent opportunity for Marylanders as well individuals in neighboring jurisdictions to find well-paying opportunities to support them and their families.

While there are limited resources available, this legislation is designed to support a program that has already demonstrated success. With a pilot program having been successfully implemented at the Department of Commerce, there should be little concern regarding the effectiveness and impact that this legislation can have.

I urge you to provide a favorable review and support of SB0906.

Sincerely,



Jack McDougale  
President and CEO  
Greater Washington Board of Trade