

TO: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbary, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Christy Wyskiel

DATE: February 16, 2023

RE: HB552 - Economic Development - Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program and Fund
(Innovation Economy Infrastructure Act of 2023)

Johns Hopkins University and Medicine urges a favorable report on **House Bill 552 – Economic Development - Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program and Fund (Innovation Economy Infrastructure Act of 2023)**.

This bill will create a \$10 million grant program, administered by the Department of Commerce to provide much needed support for infrastructure to support tech-enabled sectors, including life sciences and biotechnology. Eligible uses of the fund include supporting the creation of wet lab space.

With the creation of Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures in 2014, Johns Hopkins has become increasingly focused on the translation and commercialization of discoveries into accessible technologies, products and services for the benefit of society and, in the meantime, spur meaningful economic activity around the university. Smart, targeted investments in innovation can yield real economic results. JHU has invested over \$70 million to build robust innovation infrastructure that start-ups need in those first few critical years; this has resulted in the flow of \$600M in venture capital into Maryland-based startups and the creation of approximately 1,300 Maryland jobs. Approximately 70% of activity is in the life sciences; 30% of activity is in other technology sectors.

Given the density of raw assets originating from our renowned research institutions, among other regional assets, there is no reason we cannot lead as an innovation hub. Maryland is currently ranked 6th in the nation for research expenditures and 8th in the rate of commercialization. But, without continued attention and investment, we will miss significant growth opportunity to take our raw assets (technologies and talent) and create economic opportunity. We also risk loss of talent, and therefore technology, if Maryland does not demonstrate its commitment to leading in tech and innovation.

As his introduction of this bill indicates, Governor Wes Moore himself recognizes the opportunities associated with such a commitment. When introducing his first budget last month, he noted how far Maryland's GDP growth lags behind Massachusetts, a State that has made considerable investments in its life sciences sector. Massachusetts proves that a strategic investment in the sectors of the future can have widespread benefits for your State.

Government and Community Affairs

For the State to develop as a true innovation ecosystem, the funding that companies need to sustain and grow must be available here. Therefore, we urge a favorable report on **House Bill 552** to give those companies the tools they need to do so.

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