



TO: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Members, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Moore-Miller Administration

FROM: Andrew G. Vetter
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DATE: February 16, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 552 – *Economic Development – Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program and Fund (Innovation Economy Infrastructure Act of 2023)*

The Maryland Tech Council (MTC) is pleased to submit this letter of **support** for *House Bill 552: Economic Development – Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program and Fund (Innovation Economy Infrastructure Act of 2023)*. We are a community of nearly 700 Maryland member companies that span the full range of the technology sector. Our vision is to propel Maryland to become the number one innovation economy for life sciences and technology in the nation. We bring our members together and build Maryland’s innovation economy through advocacy, networking, and education.

House Bill 552 would establish the Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program to provide grant funding for infrastructure projects intended to support innovation in eligible technology sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, aerospace, cybersecurity, life sciences, defense, and others enumerated in the bill. Numerous MTC member companies are represented within these sectors; being able to access these funds will help Maryland’s economy to grow and be more competitive with surrounding states.

The MTC strongly believes that in order to grow Maryland’s innovation economy and be competitive nationally, we must purposefully choose to invest in this ecosystem. Last year, MTC worked with the State to secure \$2.5 million of State funding to launch BioHub Maryland, a program to provide industry-aligned training resources for Maryland residents, including online curriculum and a Maryland-based training facility. Over time, this program will grow Maryland’s economy by ensuring that Maryland’s life sciences workforce pipeline can sufficiently address the needs of Maryland’s life science employers. This is an example of the type of program that can grow Maryland’s innovation economy through strategic public investments.

The Moore Administration’s proposal to create the Build Our Future Grant Pilot Program is a big step in the direction of doing more to invest in our assets and to grow industry. Companies accessing these funds can invest directly in projects like Secure Compartmentalized Information Facilities, Wet Laboratories, Cyber Ranges, Prototype Manufacturing Centers, and other specialized workforce training, skill certification, or research-related spaces.

We are confident that this pilot program will demonstrate success in leveraging public funding to accelerate private sector growth, and that this program can be a centerpiece of Maryland’s economic development strategy into the future.

We urge a favorable report.