



15 February 2024

Dear Chairwoman Pamela Beidle, Vice Chair Katherine Klausmeier, and the esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my support of Finance Committee Bill SB0516 - Economic Development - Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission.

As an aerospace engineer supporting large and small businesses for the past thirty-four years, I have observed the importance of aerospace to the Maryland economy. I currently serve as the Executive Vice President of the Maryland Space Business Roundtable (MSBR), an organization dedicated to bringing together businesses, universities, and individuals in aerospace and technology to grow the future of space. Our industry has been fortunate to grow under federal funding to NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), NOAA's National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), Naval Air Station Patuxent River, and more! We have prospered with this federal funding, resulting in a robust ecosystem of over 9,600 aerospace-related businesses and over 142,000 aerospace-related jobs, generating ~\$1B in the tax base.

With the advent of major federal budget reductions to the federal organizations that have been the bedrock of Maryland's aerospace ecosystem for so long, our distinction as an "Aerospace State" is at great risk without the State's support. We will experience a migration of large and small companies leaving Maryland for more aerospace-friendly states like Texas, Florida, or California, resulting in a loss of talent and skills needed to propel us forward across the industry.

The creation of the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission will support the State of Maryland in ensuring the aerospace ecosystem stays strong. The Commission will make recommendations and, eventually, provide funding to programs to ensure Maryland maintains its technological edge in aerospace. This will look like providing incentives to commercial industry to come to the state, spurring new jobs and bringing in revenue. It will look like connecting industry with Maryland's high schools and higher education institutions to align coursework with industry needs so students are better prepared to enter a workforce that is welcoming and needs them. This will look like investing in strategic partnerships across the artificial intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) community so that Maryland provides the most cutting-edge jobs and products available. It will look like providing the early-career, aerospace workforce with local, affordable places to live, work, and play.

Please support the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission and protect Maryland's aerospace ecosystem to launch it to great heights in the future! For the future of our aerospace community, please vote favorably for SB0516.

Sincerely,

Marisa Achée

MSBR Executive Vice President

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