



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

DATE: February 16, 2024
BILL NO: Senate Bill 516
BILL TITLE: Economic Development - Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission
COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports Senate Bill 516 - Economic Development - Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 516 establishes the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission (MATC) as a new State public instrumentality to promote innovation in the fields of space exploration and commercial aerospace into the economy of the State. The MATC would be advised and directed by a Board comprised of government officials, public and private aerospace industry representatives, and representatives of higher educational institutions. The Maryland Aerospace and Technology Fund is also established within the MATC in order to award grants to eligible entities to promote the growth of space exploration and aerospace technology industries in the State consistent with the strategic plan the MATC is required to create. The bill also establishes the Maryland Aerospace Research and Space Economy Collaborative to advise the MATC and recommend and promote actions and opportunities in partnership with the local community within the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Zone the MATC is directed to designate.

Background:

Maryland has a vibrant and growing aerospace industry, but the State is not recognized as a leader in the industry and lacks coordination throughout the State. A key concern has been Maryland's relatively low visibility and under-promotion as a player in the aerospace industry, despite having significant capabilities and resources, such as the Goddard Space Flight Center. This lack of visibility has potentially limited the State's ability to attract aerospace businesses and talent. Additionally, current and projected future competitiveness in the sector requires channeling students into local aerospace careers. This legislation aims to bridge these gaps by establishing a dedicated Commission that would not only enhance the State's reputation in the aerospace sector but also create a more direct and efficient pathway for local students to enter into aerospace careers, thus ensuring a robust, skilled workforce to propel the state's aerospace industry forward.

Rationale:

Senate Bill 516 brings much needed attention to and collaboration within Maryland's aerospace industry – a much needed effort to support a critical growth industry in the State. Commerce fully supports promoting space exploration and commercial aerospace in Maryland and the Department welcomes the expansion of current efforts within the industry. This is a critical time

for the aerospace industry as there is support among regional aerospace partners to increase collaboration and recognition of Maryland as a leader in the industry. Further promoting and providing additional support for Maryland's aerospace industry should result in future success in attracting new businesses and growing the State's aerospace workforce.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 516.