

Hi, I'm Tom Garrison, president of the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance.

In concert with 13 military sites in Maryland, the Navy Alliance supports our regional DoD community. We work in partnership with the US Naval Air Systems Command, addressing infrastructure and resource needs for tomorrow's airborne defense systems.

When you visit St. Mary's County and NAS Pax River, you arrive at the busiest flight test center in the world, with \$6.3B annual impact to our state. Cutting edge practices, leveraging the most sophisticated simulation environment anywhere, are supporting manned and autonomous aviation industry, at the highest technical standard. The diversified aerospace sector here is supporting your Navy, but also providing solutions for NASA, SpaceX, Space Force, and others.

You'll see the AeroPark Innovation District, home of the University of Maryland's UAS Research and Ops Center (UMD UROC). AeroPark is also home to our Southern Maryland Autonomous Research and Technology (SMART) facility, an \$86 million, 84,000-square foot academic and research site that doubled the educational footprint of USM-SM, and spawned the MATRIX Lab, an unmatched autonomous systems research site.

St. Mary's County must be included in conversations to develop and update a strategic plan for the promotion of space, aeronautics, and aviation economic development in the State of Maryland.

We respectfully request that representation from St. Mary's County be included on the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission.

If St. Mary's County does not have a voice, and is excluded from Maryland's Aerospace and Technology Zone, public and private sector entities in St. Mary's will face competitive disadvantage compared to neighboring jurisdictions, when *premier cooperation* is the preferred outcome.

A **favorable vote on HB 685**, with amendments to include St. Mary's County representation on the Commission is required to represent, support, and promote ALL of Maryland's aerospace stakeholders.