



13 February 2024

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am an aerospace engineer and for the past thirty-five years I've lived and worked in Maryland in the aerospace industry in both large and small businesses. I am also a co-founder of the Maryland Aerospace Alliance, a non-profit organization whose members are businesses working across the state of Maryland. Our industry has been fortunate to grow under the glow of federal funding to NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, 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 eco-system of over 9,600 aerospace-related business, and over 142,000 aerospace-related jobs, resulting in ~\$1B in tax base. My own daughter, a junior in high school in Montgomery County, dreams of attending the University of Maryland to study Aerospace Engineering and then live and work in the aerospace field doing data analytics with machine learning. But those dreams of our best and brightest young people are at risk!

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 pre-eminence as an "Aerospace State" is at great risk without the State's support. We will experience a "bleed" of companies (both large and small) leaving the state for more aerospace friendly states like Texas, Florida, or California who provide. Graduates from our extraordinary secondary education institutions will go to work in other states and we will lose the talent and skills needed to propel us forward across the industry.

With the creation of the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission, the State of Maryland will be able to take steps to ensure the ecosystem stays strong and even grows! The Commission will make recommendations and, eventually, provide funding to programs that will ensure Maryland leaves no one behind and even propels them forward to new heights. 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 match coursework with industry needs so students can enter the workforce that is welcoming them and needs them. This will look like investing in strategic partnerships across the artificial intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) community ensuring the state of Maryland provides the most cutting-edge jobs and products available. And it will look like the early career, aerospace work force having places to live, work, play within the state that are affordable.

Please support the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission and protect Maryland's aerospace ecosystem and launch it to great heights in the future! For this reason, please vote favorably for HB685.

Sincerely,
Georgeann C Brophy
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