



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB685
Economic Development - Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission**

**Delegate Kevin M. Harris
Thursday, February 15, 2024**

For many years, Maryland has been a jewel in the Federally funded aerospace portfolio. Maryland boasts the presence of 15 of the **top 20** Aerospace & Defense companies, over 9,600 aerospace-related businesses, 142,000+ aerospace jobs bringing in \$1B to the State tax base. Maryland IS an Aerospace State. **We have the most aerospace engineers in the country, we have the most earth scientists in the world.** From Aberdeen & the Eastern Shore to Baltimore City to the I-270 corridor, there are Aerospace companies, and most importantly, their employees and families living and working in Maryland. Yet, we are at risk to losing so much of this picture due to major reductions from the Federal Budget.

When federal funding diminishes, the cutting edge, exciting work at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (Greenbelt), NOAA (Silver Spring), Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (Laurel), Naval Air Station (Pax River) and the big and small companies that support these federal institutions lose jobs -- job loss leads to the talented workforce leaving to go to other "aerospace states" like Florida, Texas, and California. Without the jobs, the early career professionals coming out of Maryland's schools like the University of Maryland or Morgan State University will find jobs in other states draining our workforce.

The establishment of the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission and Fund reflects a commitment to sustaining the aerospace ecosystem that exists and fostering innovation, growth, and opportunities within the aerospace sector, including commercial aerospace. It will not only benefit the state's economy but also provide Marylanders with access to the diverse and rewarding opportunities that the aerospace industry offers.

As these initiatives progress, they hold the potential to maintain and further Maryland's leading position within the aerospace industry, showcasing the state's dedication to technological advancement and economic development. The future looks bright, and the efforts to highlight and secure Maryland as a robust and growing "aerospace state" is possible with your vote in favor of HB685.

Thank you,

Kevin M. Harris

Delegate Kevin M. Harris
Vice Chair, Education and Economic Development Subcommittee
Legislative District 27A, Charles and Prince George's Counties