



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

**HOUSE BILL 799 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - MARYLAND INNOVATION INITIATIVE
UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP EXTENSION PROGRAM - ESTABLISHMENT**

**MARCH 25, 2025
SUPPORT**

The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) is dedicated to economic growth through the fostering of an inclusive entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem. TEDCO discovers, invests in, and helps build great Maryland-based technology companies. **TEDCO supports HB799, as passed by the House.**

As passed by the House, HB 799 - Economic Development - Maryland Innovation Initiative University Partnership Extension Program – Establishments - establishes the Maryland Innovation Initiative (MII) University Partnership Extension Program within the Maryland Innovation Initiative, making permanent the Maryland Innovation Initiative University Partnership Pilot Program, which was created under Chapter 697 of 2021 and expired in 2024 and expands the list of eligible institutions for participation in the program to all public and non-profit institutions of higher education in Maryland.

Chapter 697 of 2021 established the Maryland Innovation University Partnership Pilot Program as a two-year pilot program expanding MII's model to entrepreneurial activities at two of the State's four-year public comprehensive universities, Bowie State University (BSU) and Frostburg State University (FSU). The Program was designed to bolster the pilot universities as anchor economic development institutions for their respective regions and communities and to include the two pilot comprehensive universities in the ecosystem of knowledge and resources available at the State's other major research institution partners party to the MII program, strengthening the respective regional economic development strategies of FSU and BSU and fostering a statewide university entrepreneurship and commercialization ecosystem.

Over the duration of two fiscal years beginning July 1, 2022, the MII worked collaboratively with the two pilot universities to design and implement programs to encourage and support student and faculty entrepreneurship, industry collaboration, and technology commercialization, leveraging state resources to raise awareness, deploy educational materials, and directly fund proposals to strengthen each university's capacity to commercialize innovations. Through these programs, MII, BSU, and FSU have seen significant advancements towards the development of a resilient and lasting infrastructure that fosters and supports innovation and entrepreneurship at the two pilot institutions. Additional information on specific programs launched at each partner University through the University Pilot Program is made available on the MII University Partnership Pilot Program Report submitted on July 1, 2024.

Given the promising opportunities to further strengthen technology-based economic development for the State of Maryland, TEDCO supports the continuation of the partnership established through the program, and several efforts funded through the Program will continue beyond the scope of the pilot. These efforts are supported jointly by the MII Technology Validation Program and technology transfer infrastructure at each university. HB 799 would enable and formalize this continued partnership as well as provide an opportunity for additional institutions of higher education to participate in the program.



As passed by the House, HB 799 also eliminates the mandatory funding of \$500,000 in fiscal years 2027 and 2028 and instead permits discretionary funding of \$250,000 in those fiscal years. Further, the legislation directs TEDCO to produce a report outlining similar programs in neighboring states, and the potential economic benefits and costs of expanding the initiative to all public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education operating in the state. TEDCO anticipates the production of this report can be fulfilled within existing resources.

TEDCO thanks the State of Maryland for its past support of the University Pilot program and appreciates the opportunity to provide a position statement in support of HB799.