



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 799: Maryland Innovation Initiative University Partnership Program

Senate Finance Committee

Tuesday, March 25th, 2025 | 1:00 PM

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Innovation is the driving force behind our state's economic growth. While innovation funding has long been concentrated in our state's urban areas and larger universities – it's important to acknowledge the next big technology invention or startup idea can come from community colleges and universities that have not historically seen their share of investment in technology innovation.

HB 799 makes permanent the Maryland Innovation Initiative Institution Partnership Extension Program, which expands opportunities at Bowie State University (BSU) and Frostburg State University (FSU) for entrepreneurial development, and industry engagement. This program has resulted in the creation of over 400 sustained jobs, a 13 to 1 return on state dollars through public, private, and federal funding. The amended version of the bill expands eligibility to additional public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education and makes funding discretionary.

Each institution of higher education must provide a cash match equivalent to 10% to the amount awarded by the Maryland Technology Development Corporation to qualify for participation in the extension program. Additionally, to qualify for a grant under the program, a project proposal must:

- Support the creation of a new technology-based business in Maryland
- Advance technology toward commercialization of a product or service
- Foster entrepreneurial development at BSU, FSU, or other institutions
- Create an opportunity for meaningful economic impact in the region around BSU or FSU; or
- Foster collaboration between BSU or FSU and an industry partner, including (1) product development with commercialization potential and (2) matching funds provided by the industry partner.

Studies have shown that university-led innovation programs contribute significantly to regional economic growth. This bill guarantees that institutions outside the major research corridors can compete for commercialization funding and build stronger ties with industry partners – building a pipeline for long-term economic development. Expanding funding for commercialization initiatives at Bowie State, Frostburg State, and other institutions of higher education will help bridge the innovation gap, ensuring that every region and community can play a role in Maryland's innovation economy.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB 799.