



## Queen Anne's County

### County Commissioners:

James J. Moran, At Large  
Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1  
J. Patrick McLaughlin, District 2  
Philip L. Dumenil, District 3  
Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

## THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

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County Administrator: *Todd R. Mohn, PE*  
Executive Assistant to County Commissioners: *Stephanie Jarrell*  
County Attorney: *Patrick Thompson, Esquire*

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 130  
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: HB498 — Economic Development - Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADE) Act ***SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS***

Dear Honorable Atterbeary,

On behalf of the Queen Anne's County Commissioners, we are writing to express our support with proposed amendments for Maryland House Bill 498, which proposes a broad restructuring of Maryland's economic development programs. While Queen Anne's County supports many of the modernization efforts and efficiency improvements, we have concerns regarding the narrow focus of industry targets, the centralization of decision-making authority, and the elimination of valuable incentive programs.

As a rural community, Queen Anne's County, along with many of our neighboring counties focuses on our core industries of Agriculture, Tourism, Manufacturing and Wholesale. Emerging industries include professional services, health care and technology-based businesses. However, the state's industry focus does not reflect the strengths of all the regions therefore a regional approach should be considered.

We support efforts of House Bill 498 is to revamp and rebrand programs like Advantage Maryland (MEDAAF) and Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority (MSBDFA) to better align with industry priorities. However, consolidating decision-making authority solely under the Secretary of Commerce removes an important check-and-balance system. Oversight bodies should remain in place to ensure equitable and transparent deployment of taxpayer funds.

Queen Anne's County supports the expansion of the Childcare Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund but recommends that the program be reviewed for usability, as businesses have found the application process difficult to navigate. We have several businesses that are in cue to apply for this program and look forward to expanding childcare resources in the county.

We strongly oppose the repeal of the Job Creation Tax Credit (JCTC) as this program provides a critical incentive for business expansion and workforce development especially for businesses that may not qualify for local tax credits. Instead of eliminating it, we recommend streamlining the application process to increase utilization.

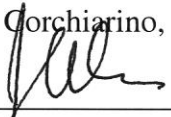
Additionally, the elimination of the Maryland Economic Development Commission (MEDC) raises concerns about the lack of public oversight for key economic development agencies, including Commerce, MEDCO, TEDCO, and the Maryland Marketing Partnership.

We urge you to support the DECADE Act with the following key amendments: a broader industry focus to be reflective of all of Maryland, especially rural counties; retention of effective incentive programs such as JCTC and more balanced administrative oversight are essential to ensuring this legislation benefits all of Maryland's diverse economies; and refine the bill as outlined in detail above, ensuring economic development programs remain equitable, effective, and regionally inclusive. Thank you for your attention to this important legislation and continued commitment to the prosperity of Maryland's rural communities.

Respectfully,

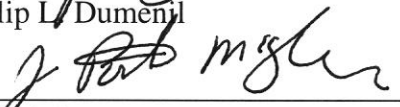
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
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