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BILL NO: **SB 388**

TITLE: Economic Development – Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADE) Act

SPONSOR: Senate President

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 16, 2026

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 388 – Economic Development – Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DEACDE) Act. Baltimore is Maryland’s economic engine and this bill aligns with how our region wins.

Maryland’s long-term competitiveness depends on whether the Baltimore region continues to grow, innovate, and attract major investment. State analyses have recognized the Baltimore region as a key “economic engine” for Maryland, with Baltimore County and Baltimore City among the top contributors to statewide GDP.

Baltimore County sits at the center of that engine:

Global logistics advantage anchored by the Port of Baltimore and the I-95 corridor, which is critical to statewide trade, supply chain resilience, and manufacturing competitiveness. The Port continues to post major performance milestones and remains a statewide economic generator.

Nationally significant industrial capacity at Tradepoint Atlantic, an East Coast logistics and industrial hub with deepwater access, rail, and highway connectivity.

Air access for commerce and talent through BWI Marshall, which drives substantial economic activity and supports a large regional job base.

A diversified base of employers and workers across manufacturing, life sciences, cybersecurity/defense-adjacent industries, and professional services that are positioned to scale if the State has the right competitive tools.

The DECADE Act supports the kinds of investments that match Baltimore County’s assets and Maryland’s growth sectors.

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Why Baltimore County supports the DECADE Act:

1) A stronger, faster “closing” tool, paired with accountability, helps Maryland compete for transformational projects.

The bill redesignates and refocuses the State’s deal-closing capacity through the Strategic Closing Fund and reinforces performance-based expectations, including claw back provisions tied to measurable outcomes.

For Baltimore County, this matters because we routinely compete—regionally and nationally—for:

- Advanced manufacturing expansions
- Logistics and distribution investments
- Research and commercialization footprints
- Headquarters and high-value back-office relocations

Those opportunities move quickly. Maryland needs a modern, credible closing tool that is both nimble and disciplined. SB 388’s emphasis on performance requirements and clawbacks is the right balance.

2) “Build Our Future” is exactly the kind of infrastructure program that unlocks private investment and workforce outcomes.

SB 388 extends and strengthens the Build Our Future program and targets innovation infrastructure in a defined set of eligible technology sectors ranging from advanced manufacturing and AI to biotech, cybersecurity, defense, quantum, and robotics.

Equally important: the bill supports real-world, job-producing spaces like wet labs, cyber ranges, prototype manufacturing centers, SCIFs, and specialized training/certification facilities. These are precisely the capital-intensive building blocks that attract employers and accelerate cluster growth.

The program’s strong matching requirements are also a feature, not a bug: they ensure State dollars leverage significant private and institutional capital.

Finally, the bill’s emphasis on prioritizing applicants located in Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise Zones helps ensure the program supports place-based cluster strategies where public investment can catalyze durable ecosystems of employers, suppliers, talent, and entrepreneurs.



3) Continued support for R&D and innovation-driven employers is essential to growing high-wage jobs.

The DECADE Act extends and refines tools that help firms invest in Maryland-based innovation, including the Research and Development Tax Credit, whose stated purpose is to “foster increased research activities and expenditures in Maryland.” The bill also updates timing/approval provisions for the program.

For Baltimore County, these incentives help keep research, prototyping, and commercialization activity here, supporting demand for skilled workers and reinforcing partnerships among employers, training providers, and institutions.

4) Tools that support small businesses, minority- and women-owned businesses, and security-based contracting are highly relevant to our economy.

SB 388 directs a portion of video lottery terminal proceeds to be distributed between the Maryland Small Business Development Financing Fund and the Small, Minority, and Women–Owned Businesses Account. That infusion supports business formation and growth, particularly important in older industrial communities and main-street corridors across Baltimore County.

The bill also extends the Employer Security Clearance Costs Tax Credit window (now before January 1, 2033), supporting firms that compete for security-based contracting and need to invest in clearance processes and secure facilities. This is a real competitiveness issue for firms operating in the broader defense-adjacent economy of central Maryland.

5) Creative economy provisions strengthen statewide visibility and project-based job creation.

The bill allows certain film production entities to amend applications when budgets change significantly and removes a prior cap on aggregate credits for a single production activity. While not the core of Baltimore County’s industrial strategy, these provisions support project-based employment, vendor spending, and tourism/placemaking benefits that matter across the region.

The DECADE Act is aligned with what will keep Maryland competitive: decisive deal-closing capacity, infrastructure that enables innovation, and incentives that reward real investment and job creation, backed by transparency and accountability.

Because the Baltimore region is a primary driver of Maryland’s economy, tools that accelerate growth here generate benefits statewide through supply chains, tax revenues, workforce opportunities, and long-term competitiveness.

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Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 388 from the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. For more information, please contact Kayenda Twesigye, State Legislative Officer of Government Affairs at ktwesigye@baltimorecountymd.gov.