

**House Economic Matters & Appropriations Committees**  
**April 1, 2026**

**Senate Bill 905 - Maryland Technology Development Corporation - Maryland Advanced  
Manufacturing Grant Program– Established**

**Position:      Favorable**

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Chair Valderrama, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Charkoudian, Vice Chair Kaiser and members of the House Economic Matters & Appropriations Committees, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 905. SB 905 establishes the Maryland Advanced Manufacturing Grant Program Fund within the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) to support the growth of companies specializing in regenerative medicine and other advanced manufacturing. I appreciate the bill sponsor Senator Zucker's leadership and support on this important bill and I want to thank TEDCO and its CEO for inviting me to share Harbor's story with you today. This bill is not just good policy, it's an opportunity for Maryland to insulate our regional manufacturing base, ensure supply chain resiliency, and empower innovators bringing new technologies to market to do that manufacturing here, instead of other states.

**Who We Are**

My name is Josh Barnes. I am the Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer of **Harbor Designs & Manufacturing, LLC**, a Baltimore City contract manufacturer and engineering services company, which operates under a unique Regional Collaborative Manufacturing Center model. We are the anchor tenant of the Baltimore Innovation Center in Pigtown which is an industrial and residential neighborhood in South Baltimore. The fact that it is both industrial and residential is why we chose to locate there. Our 25,000-45,000 square-foot flex space facility is certified to both ISO 9001 and ISO 13485, for medical and non-medical device design and manufacturing.

Our clients range from Fortune 100 companies like Northrop Grumman and Telsa to early-stage life science startups spinning out of Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, to federal labs like APL where we've supported pandemic response, and federal agencies like the Department of Veterans Affairs where we've developed devices to improve outcomes for veterans, the Department of Energy who we supplied cyber security devices to, Amtrak where we've helped added wifi and connected solutions to every train in the country, the US Postal Service who we produce biologic threat detection components for, and companies whose devices support the defense industry. The products we've designed and or produced have made their way to the International Space Station, are on the shelves of national retailers, in TV commercials you've seen, are on shows like Shark Tank, and are actively helping doctors, pharmacist, environmentalist, and even people in the mining and clean energy industries do their jobs behind the scenes. Across our team's history, we have helped bring over 500 products and innovations to market, many of them manufactured right here in Maryland. We are proud to support and work in collaboration with TEDCO, DefTech, The MiHub Cooperative, the Maryland Business Opportunity Center, the Mid Atlantic Veterans Business Outreach Center, The Maryland Clean Energy Center, Maryland Energy Innovation Accelerator, and the Johns Hopkins and University of Maryland's Universities and Medical Systems. As we support a comparable swath of innovations and new products, we have seen firsthand how TEDCO's supports and works in tandem with all of these organizations and how its investment in Maryland companies as the joining fiber of our tech ecosystem creates downstream work for manufacturers like us.

## **Baltimore's Story — and Ours**

I come from a multigenerational Maryland manufacturing family and serve on the board of the Baltimore Museum of Industry. I grew up hearing stories about Bethlehem Steel's plant at Sparrows Point and how that plant enabled generations of my family and afforded my mother and her siblings the ability to go to college. I heard stories about the work my father did at the now shuttered GM plant on Broening Highway. The city was home to Allied Chemical, and Procter & Gamble and so many others. Those industries didn't just manufacture products. They built careers, families, and communities and served as economic development engines. They served as a catalyst for upward mobility and turned Baltimore's most abundant resource - its people - into the engine of an economy.

I want to tell you about one of our employees. He came to Harbor after his life was upended, arrested in an ATF raid on his illegal convenience store for selling individual cigarettes, alcohol, and giving under the table tattoos. As part of his rehabilitation he needed a normal job and I'm sure he thought as the time any would do, and I doubt he expected to be with us long. But when he realized he was assembling a bioreactor destined for the International Space Station and as he was building devices he knew had saved real lives around the world, it lit a spark and that entry level job became a career. We keep in regular touch and is now making \$200,000 a year. That is what manufacturing can do. What it has always done. And that is what **this bill** can do. When we make investments in the right places, they become force multipliers.

Our city and state became great in no small part because of investments in industry and manufacturing, and we have all watched and can see the results of chronic disinvestment. We are located in Baltimore City specifically to help reimagine what industry and urban and regional manufacturing means today, and to reignite that path to upward mobility, while empowering innovators to derisk their product launches and allow them to build those businesses here. Harbor Designs & Manufacturing has made the long term investment. The question before this committee is how much is Maryland will invest to empower local manufacturers to be globally competitive.

## **Senate Bill 905 – The Advanced Manufacturing Grant Program**

SB 905 creates a dedicated capital grant fund within TEDCO for Maryland manufacturers to invest in facility upgrades, specialized equipment, and infrastructure. The economic return on this investment is exceptional: every dollar invested in advanced manufacturing generates \$2.64 in broader economic activity, and every manufacturing job supports nearly five additional jobs in the surrounding community. This is an investment that quite literally pays for itself.

Maryland has the best research institutions in the world. Johns Hopkins. University of Maryland. Morgan State. We have renowned institutions like NIH and NSF in our backyard. We are a world-class R&D engine. But too often, the companies born here - the ones whose science was incubated with Maryland tax dollars - leave for California, Massachusetts, New Jersey or New York because that is where states have invested in their manufacturing base. Maryland risks becoming a high-cost research facility for other states' economies. That is a strategic failure we can correct.

Harbor is the manufacturing partner that many of those TEDCO-backed companies turn to when they are ready to build. When a TEDCO portfolio company receives support and begins to scale, they need an ISO 9001 or 13485-certified contract manufacturer to produce their device, establish their quality system, and navigate FDA requirements, and the complex matrix of options related to engineering and scaling production, we are one of the core resources they call on to see how we can help. But SB 905 doesn't just

help startups, it makes us more competitive and strengthens the entire supply chain of Maryland's innovation economy, companies like ours, and our local supply chain base.

We are currently supporting multiple companies in the regenerative medicine space creating scaffolding with regenerative properties for cells to grow on in reconstructive surgery, bioreactors that are mass producing exosomes for wound care, and others, but the funding this bill would afford, extends beyond the target market of regenerative medicine and into the 4.0 advanced manufacturing base as a whole.

Harbor is actively raising capital to invest in advanced robotics and an AI-enabled multisided platform that we believe will allow us to hire and train entry-level Baltimore residents, pay them living wages and beyond, and develop them into Industry 4.0 technologists who will stay with us or go on to thriving careers. Our vision is not automation that replaces workers. It is automation that makes workers more powerful - that allows someone with the right work ethic and aptitude to operate sophisticated systems, walk to work and earn beyond a living wage, and build a real career with multigenerational impact, without having to take three buses to a warehouse job that doesn't pay them enough to live.

With Advanced Manufacturing Grant support, Harbor could attract greater matching investment to bring online our planned automation and cobots, expanded cleanroom-class assembly capacity, and the digital manufacturing infrastructure our life science and regenerative medicine clients require in order to be competitive in their markets. We could take on more Maryland clients. We could attract more clients from other states. We could train more Baltimore residents and set them on a path to success. We could grow and the companies we serve can explode, and do it right here in Maryland.

Without it, we face a real competitive threat. Other states are actively recruiting companies like Harbor and our clients with incredible incentives. I am proud to call Baltimore our home and Maryland our headquarters. But I want this committee to know: we are receiving strong investment incentives from states like New Jersey. My intention is to build out our growth vision as a regional advanced manufacturing and innovation center in Maryland, and then scale that model to other cities and regions across the country. We want to prove that model out here, and make Maryland the example to follow across the country and globe and your support of this bills helps us and our clients make the decision to stay here a easy one.

### **The Bigger Case: Build It Where We Invented It**

We have lived through a pandemic that broke global supply chains. We have watched trade wars disrupt the flow of critical components. We have seen what happens when the things we depend on are made ten thousand miles away. The innovations born in Maryland - paid for in part by Maryland taxpayers - should be built in Maryland. We owe that to our technology founders. And more than that, we owe it to ourselves to make that a smart business decision, not just a patriotic one.

Just as farm-to-table makes sense in restaurants - quickly available, lower carbon footprint, stronger local economy - the same logic applies in manufacturing. Produce close to home. Shorten the supply chain, simplify the management and access to world class resources, and draw in innovators from states not smart enough to make these kinds of investments. And do it while we benefit from the investments we already made to get these technologies and companies started. When we make those investments in urban and regional manufacturing, we put into motion an economic flywheel that benefits the companies, the workers, and the communities all at once.

Robotics and automation do not have to mean the elimination of jobs. In our vision, they mean empowering people. They mean hiring and training entry-level workers with the right work ethic and aptitude to become 4.0 technologists - people who can then go on to thriving careers. Programs like these don't just support the companies that receive the investment, or the startups that can stay local cost-

effectively. They support the **people** who live in our communities. They support the family that no longer has to choose between rent and groceries because someone at a company like Harbor gave them a chance and the State supported us with the tools we and our technology clients need to thrive.

## **Closing**

Baltimore became a great city because of investments in industry. Bethlehem Steel at Sparrows Point. The GM plant, Alide Chromium, Procter & Gamble, etc. Those investments created the middle class that built this state. We have a chance, right now, to make that kind of investment again - not in smokestacks, but in smart, clean, advanced manufacturing and support for our leading-edge innovators. Not just for the companies, but for the people. Not just for today, but for the generation that is watching to see whether this city and this state will fight for them.

I am proud to be a multigenerational Maryland manufacturer. I am proud to serve this community. And I am asking this committee to invest in the infrastructure that will allow companies like Harbor, our industry partners, and our clients to do more of it, here, for the people who need it most.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support SB 905, and I urge the Committee to vote favorably on this legislation. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

**Joshua Barnes** COO & Co-Founder

**Harbor Designs & Manufacturing** Product Design | Engineering | Regional Manufacturing

1100 Wicomico Street | Suite 600 | Baltimore MD 21230 | tel [410 605 9399](tel:410-605-9399) x 102 | cell [410 596 8154](tel:410-596-8154)

[Josh.barnes@harbordesigns.net](mailto:Josh.barnes@harbordesigns.net)

[www.harbordesigns.net](http://www.harbordesigns.net)

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