

March 27, 2026

To: Chair and Committee members of Economic Matters

Re: SB0905 Bill- Requesting Bill Amendments -Locating the Advanced Stem Cell Manufacturing Program within the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to urge that the new Advanced Stem Cell Manufacturing program for regenerative medicine be operated by the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (MSCRF). I have been serving on the MSCRF's review committee for nearly 20 years and have 42 years of commercial experience in stem cell and gene therapy research and product development, and pioneering commercialization of stem cells especially induced pluripotent cells. Based on my two decades of involvement in MSCRF's review process and my work in advanced manufacturing for regenerative medicine, I believe this is the structure that will deliver the greatest benefit to Maryland.

First, the mission of the Advanced Manufacturing initiative aligns directly with MSCRF's core mandate. MSCRF was created to advance stem cell and regenerative medicine research and translation in Maryland, including support for industry. Locating this program with MSCRF keeps strategy, funding decisions, and oversight under a single expert body that is already focused on this precise field with ethical oversight rather than dispersing responsibility across broader technology programs.

Second, MSCRF has a proven and highly relevant track record in manufacturing support. It already operates a Manufacturing Assistance Program designed specifically to help Maryland companies build or expand GMP and other regulated manufacturing capabilities for cell and regenerative medicine products. This provides a field-tested template for evaluating infrastructure, equipment, and facility requests that the Advanced Manufacturing program can immediately build upon.

Third, the Maryland Stem Research Commission, (that oversees MSCRF) and the review committee brings deep scientific and technical review expertise that is critical for this type of funding. Advanced regenerative medicine manufacturing involves complex biologics, evolving regulatory expectations, and specialized infrastructure and ethical oversight. MSCRF has long relied on expert peer review in stem cell biology, cell and gene therapy, and biomanufacturing, and it routinely evaluates similar translational and capital-intensive proposals. This existing expertise will improve the quality, safety, ethics and long-term impact of awards.

Fourth, housing the program within MSCRF will increase efficiency and reduce duplication. Rather than creating parallel review and administrative structures elsewhere, the State can leverage MSCRF's established processes, staff, and cycles. This will accelerate program launch, ensure consistent evaluation criteria, and allow more of the appropriated funds to reach companies instead of administrative overhead.

Fifth, placing the Advanced Stem Cell Manufacturing program at MSCRF will strengthen strategic coherence across Maryland's regenerative medicine ecosystem. MSCRF already supports a continuum from basic discovery through translational and commercialization-oriented grants. Adding an advanced manufacturing component under the same governance creates a clear, coordinated pipeline—from early research to clinical translation to manufacturing scale-up—aligned around a unified vision for Maryland's leadership in regenerative medicine.

Finally, MSCRF offers strong governance, ethical experience and stakeholder confidence. Over nearly two decades, it has demonstrated transparent, competitive, and conflict-managed review processes that are well understood by Maryland's academic and industry communities. Companies and investors already view MSCRF as a trusted steward of state funds in this space. Entrusting it with operation of the Advanced Stem Cell Manufacturing program will provide continuity and predictability for stakeholders making long-term investments in Maryland facilities and workforce.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you support having the Advanced Manufacturing program for regenerative medicine proposed under the bill SB0905 be operated by the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission. I would be pleased to share further perspective from my experience reviewing MSCRF proposals and working in advanced manufacturing for regenerative medicine.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on behalf of Maryland's life sciences community.

Sincerely,

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