

SB0867: Economic Development - Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission – Alterations

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0867 – WITH AMENDMENT
Senate Finance Committee
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Submitted by:
Georgie Brophy, Vice Chair
Maryland Aerospace & Technology Commission (MATC)

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

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

My name is Georgie Brophy, and I serve as the Vice Chair of the Maryland Aerospace & Technology Commission (MATC). I am pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 867, with one requested amendment.

SB867 is an essential update to the structure, membership, and mission of the Maryland Aerospace & Technology Commission. These changes modernize the Commission to reflect Maryland’s rapidly evolving aerospace ecosystem statewide—commercial space, autonomous systems, aeronautics innovation, and defense-adjacent technologies.

Maryland’s aerospace sector includes NASA Goddard, NAS Patuxent River, NOAA, Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab, Naval Research Lab, and more than 9,000 aerospace-related companies statewide. These assets contribute approximately \$50 billion to the state’s GDP and support 172,000+ jobs.

WHY SB0867 MATTERS

1. Modernized Membership Reflecting Today’s Aerospace Landscape

The bill updates Commission membership to include commercial space companies, advanced aviation leaders, key federal anchors, and representatives from Aerospace & Technology Zones statewide, aligning representation with market structure.

2. Creating the Executive Director Role

The Commission needs staffing capacity to coordinate statewide aerospace strategy, grantmaking, and partnerships.

3. Strengthening Maryland’s Ability to Attract Investment

SB867 enhances the Commission’s mandate to support commercialization, workforce development, infrastructure planning, and cross-sector collaboration.

REQUESTED AMENDMENT

Remove Section 5-2605(E): the \$30,000,000 annual appropriation mandate.

I request striking this section because:

- Foundational strategic work by the Commission with an Executive Director must be completed first.
- Staffing capacity must be in place before administering major funds.
- Modernization of structure is the essential priority this session.

Other States Are Moving Faster

Maryland's peer states are not waiting. Texas, Alabama, Colorado, Virginia, and New Mexico have already made decisive aerospace investments ranging from **\$15 million to \$300 million**, reshaping the national competitive landscape around us. Their momentum is accelerating, not slowing. States that are acting now are capturing federal missions, commercial contracts, innovative companies and technologies, workforce pipelines, and infrastructure commitments that will define the next decade. In this environment, standing still is not neutral — **it is falling behind**. Maryland must match the pace and clarity of purpose these states are demonstrating if we intend to remain a national aerospace leader. *Maryland cannot compete if it stands still while others act.*

Inaction Is a Strategic Choice — With Consequences

In a rapidly evolving aerospace economy, inaction is not a pause — **it is a retreat**. The industry is shifting toward commercial space, autonomy, dual-use technologies, and new workforce demands. If Maryland does not adapt its structures and investments now, we are effectively choosing to let other states determine the trajectory of the next decade. Standing still in a competitive environment is not maintaining position; **it is actively losing ground**.

Modernization Is Essential to Protect Maryland's Leadership

Maryland's aerospace assets are extraordinary — NASA Goddard, NAS Patuxent River, NOAA, APL, NRL, and more than 9,000 aerospace companies across the state. They contribute **\$50 billion in GDP** and support **172,000 jobs** statewide. But these advantages are not self-sustaining. Peer states are modernizing their structures and investing aggressively in the next generation of space and aviation markets. Current Maryland-based companies are being lured away to other states. **If Maryland does not modernize the Commission through SB867, our legacy strengths will erode faster than we can rebuild them.**

This Bill Is the Minimum Action Required to Stay Competitive

SB867 is not aspirational — **it is the baseline action required for Maryland to remain competitive in commercial space**, national security aerospace, and advanced aviation. Other states have already built structures, funding mechanisms, and incentive systems needed to compete. Maryland must modernize its Commission now to avoid being outpaced. **Choosing not to update our structure this session would be choosing to let competitor states define where high-growth aerospace markets land next.**

Removing the Fiscal Language Does Not Mean Standing Still

Requesting the removal of Section 5-2605(E) this year should not be misinterpreted as slowing Maryland's progress. The modernization components of SB867 must move forward now — because our competitor states are already moving. The amendment simply ensures we build the right foundation before taking on major appropriations. **Standing still on the structural updates, however, would set Maryland back at a moment when speed, alignment, and readiness are essential.**

CONCLUSION

SB0867 positions Maryland to remain competitive in aerospace. With the amendment to remove Section 5-2605(E), I urge a Favorable Report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Georgie Brophy
Vice Chair
Maryland Aerospace & Technology Commission