

March 5, 2026

FWA Support for SB867

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

As the Vice Chair of the Maryland Aerospace Alliance (MAA), I strongly urge a **favorable report on SB 867** with the amendment proposed by Senator Alonzo Washington on 3/4/2026. Incorporated in 2024 to champion the growth and health of Maryland's aerospace industry, the MAA represents a sector that is a primary engine of our state's economy.

Aerospace is Maryland's Economic Powerhouse In 2024, the aerospace industry contributed **\$50 billion** to Maryland's GDP—nearly 10% of the state's entire economic output. The sector supports **172,000 total jobs** and generates more than **\$2 billion in state and local tax revenue** annually. Maryland boasts a concentration of space research and technology talent that is **9.29 times the national average**, making us a global leader in the field.

The Competitive Crisis Despite these strengths, Maryland is at a critical juncture. While we have historically led in civil space and defense, the "new space" economy is shifting toward commercial and dual-use technologies. Our peer states are investing aggressively to capture this high-growth market, with Virginia investing \$45M and Texas \$300M. Without the targeted action proposed in SB 867 to improve the MATC structure to enable their Strategic Plan, the legacy assets that made us a leader will be outpaced by states investing today.

The Solution: SB867 This legislation moves Maryland from strategy to action through three critical priorities:

1. **A Space-Focused Investment Fund:** This fund provides the authority to deploy grants, loans, and strategic co-investments to attract new companies and retain high-skilled jobs that are currently being targeted by other states. I agree with Senator Washington's amendment to remove the funding for this portion of the bill while allowing the structure to be set up for the future.
2. **Professionalizing Governance (PMO):** SB 867 moves the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission (MATC) beyond its current volunteer capacity by establishing a staffed Program Management Office through an Executive Director. This ensures sustained coordination and professional delivery of statewide initiatives in partnership with the Department of Commerce.
3. **Modernizing Commission Membership:** By adding commercial space and private sector voices to the MATC, the state gains real-time market awareness to improve policy design and competitiveness.

Speed matters at this moment and waiting another fiscal year to realign the MATC with its strategic plan will set Maryland farther back as other states race ahead. We must act now to safeguard our existing strengths and position Maryland as the premier location for aerospace opportunity. I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 867.

Michael Barton

Vice Chair

Maryland Aerospace Alliance

Michael.Barton@mdaero.org

(901) 485-1464

6202 Wagner Lane

Bethesda, MD 20816

