



Maryland Senate Finance Committee

Re: SB 867 – Expansion of the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Space Phoenix Systems respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 867.

Maryland possesses extraordinary aerospace assets, including NASA facilities such as NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, major defense contractors, research universities, and a deep cybersecurity and AI ecosystem. Yet, Maryland lacks a structured, founder-centered commercialization engine that translates research strength into scalable aerospace companies.

SB 867 modernizes the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission at precisely the right moment. The global space economy is expanding rapidly, and states that create coordinated capital, policy, and innovation infrastructure will capture disproportionate growth.

The most critical feature of this legislation is the opportunity to build structured engagement with industry founders and investors — backed by real support mechanisms.

For aerospace startups, barriers to scale are distinct:

- Long development cycles
- Capital-intensive hardware requirements
- Complex federal contracting pathways
- Limited early-stage private investment appetite

A revitalized Commission with an Executive Director and grantmaking authority can serve as a coordinated bridge between:

- Founders building high-risk, high-impact technologies
- Institutional and venture investors evaluating aerospace opportunities
- Federal agencies seeking mission-aligned partners
- Universities commercializing research



Structured engagement should include formal advisory councils of active founders and investors, transparent capital deployment strategies, public-private co-investment models, and recurring industry roundtables that inform state priorities. This is not simply networking; it is governance design that integrates market actors into execution.

The proposed \$30,000,000 annual appropriation beginning in FY2028 provides the stability necessary to attract private co-investment, de-risk early innovation, and retain Maryland-based companies that might otherwise relocate to more aggressive aerospace states.

Maryland has the intellectual capital. SB 867 provides the structural capital.

By strengthening leadership, expanding purpose, and enabling grant deployment, this bill positions Maryland to move from being a research powerhouse to becoming a commercialization leader in space science, space technology, and aeronautics.

Space Phoenix Systems urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 867.

Respectfully submitted,
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