

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony as a Maryland resident, taxpayer, and parent in strong support of SB867.

Maryland's aerospace leadership was built through deliberate investment and thoughtful coordination across research institutions, federal laboratories, private industry, and state government. Anchors such as NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Naval Air Systems Command, and Aberdeen Proving Ground have helped shape a globally significant ecosystem.

Sustaining that advantage now requires modernized governance, broader representation, and continued strategic commitment.

I recognize that this legislation is being considered in a difficult budget climate. The State faces real fiscal pressures and competing priorities. However, aerospace as a lighthouse sector is not discretionary in the long term. Other states are investing now to attract commercial space companies, expand advanced manufacturing, and position themselves as national leaders in emerging technologies. **If Maryland pauses while competitors accelerate, we risk losing momentum that took decades to build.** The General Assembly retains options to calibrate funding levels in a responsible manner. Even if appropriations are adjusted downward, the structural reforms within this bill merit passage. At minimum, Maryland should cement the proposed changes to the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission to ensure our governance framework reflects today's market realities.

Two administrative elements of this bill are especially important.

First, the addition of **stronger regional representation** on the Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission ensures that aerospace policy reflects the full geographic diversity of our state. Aerospace activity in Maryland is not confined to a single corridor. It spans Southern Maryland, the Baltimore region, the National Capital region, and communities that support advanced manufacturing and supply chains. Regional voices bring on-the-ground insight about workforce needs, infrastructure constraints, small business participation, and emerging innovation clusters. That perspective strengthens policy alignment and ensures that state strategy reflects real economic conditions across Maryland.

Second, **expanding commercial representation** on the Commission acknowledges a fundamental shift in the aerospace landscape. The national space economy is evolving rapidly, with increased private sector launch activity, satellite services, advanced air mobility development, and commercialization of research. If Maryland intends to compete in this environment, governance structures must capture the energy, risk tolerance, and capital dynamics of the commercial market. Broader commercial participation ensures that state strategy reflects not only federal missions, but also the realities of venture-backed firms, mid-sized manufacturers, and entrepreneurial growth companies.

These are not merely administrative changes. **Let's send a signal that Maryland recognizes the transformation underway in aerospace and intends to position itself accordingly.**

As a parent of a Maryland graduating High School Senior set to study aerospace engineering, I think about whether the state will offer meaningful opportunities five to ten years from now. **Will we have modernized our institutions to reflect new industry dynamics, or will we rely on legacy structures while other states innovate more aggressively?**

SB867 reflects stewardship. It strengthens governance, embraces commercial momentum, and positions Maryland for sustained aerospace leadership.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.



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