



February 17, 2026

The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama  
House Economic Matters Committee  
230 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Support for House Bill 0898 - DECADE Act**

Chairwoman Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Distinguished Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

**The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) requests a FAVORABLE REPORT on House Bill 0898.**

AAEDC is a quasi-governmental organization whose mission is to foster diverse economic growth by empowering businesses, expanding employment opportunities, and revitalizing communities. In partnership with the County and the State, AAEDC delivers tools and resources that strengthen the local business climate and expand the tax base across diverse industry sectors.

The 2026 DECADE Act strategically strengthens Maryland's economic development toolkit by modernizing program administration, streamlining incentive delivery, and extending the sunset on critical business attraction and retention tools that are essential to compete for private-sector investment in a highly competitive regional and national marketplace.

Of particular importance to Anne Arundel's workforce and key growth industries is the proposal to extend the life of the **Job Creation Tax Credits (JCTC), Employer Security Clearance Cost Tax Credits and the Research and Development Tax Credit Program**. These incentives are proven tools that directly support job creation, talent attraction, business expansion, and innovation-driven growth.

AAEDC also strongly supports the proposed reforms to the **Maryland Economic Development Assistance Authority and Fund (MEDAAF)**, which align with economic development best practices and will enhance the State's ability to respond to time-sensitive and highly competitive business attraction and expansion opportunities. These enhancements allow for flexibility in local resource allocation and can streamline the approval process, particularly for incentive deals that are highly desirable to both the state and local jurisdiction.



We further support placing the new **Strategic Closing Fund (formerly Sunny Day Program)** under the purview of Commerce as a flexible funding tool that can be deployed strategically to close high-impact projects that deliver significant economic returns to the State's economy.

Finally, Anne Arundel County has a strong and productive partnership with the **Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO)** and welcomes the opportunity to work directly with MEDCO to deploy **Build Our Future and RISE** funds. MEDCO brings deep expertise in structuring, financing, and delivering complex economic development and infrastructure projects. Moving these programs to MEDCO leverages its bonding capabilities and project management expertise to scale impact, accelerate implementation, and multiply the economic return on public investments.

For these reasons, AAEDC respectfully urges a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on House Bill 0898 and appreciates the General Assembly's continued commitment to strengthening Maryland's economic competitiveness and local economic development capacity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Gowan", written in a cursive style.

Amy Gowan  
CEO/President  
Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation