
House Ways and Means Committee
February 24, 2026

**HB 898 - Economic Development - Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing
Development Efforts (DECADE) Act**

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 898**. This administration bill reflects a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to strengthening Maryland's economic competitiveness, supporting innovation, and advancing workforce and industry growth across the State.

Maryland's community colleges serve as the primary workforce training and talent development pipeline for many of the industries supported through the DECADE Act. Provisions related to innovation infrastructure, strategic economic development investments, small business financing, and research and development incentives will strengthen Maryland's ability to attract and retain employers while ensuring that residents have access to high-quality training aligned with evolving industry needs. Community colleges partner closely with employers across sectors including cybersecurity, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and emerging technologies, and the investments and programmatic changes contemplated in this legislation will help sustain and expand those partnerships.

MACC is particularly supportive of provisions that expand support for innovation infrastructure and workforce training spaces through programs such as the Build Our Future Grant Program and Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise Zones. Community colleges frequently collaborate with industry and regional partners to develop specialized training facilities, including cyber ranges, advanced manufacturing labs, and applied research and workforce training centers. These initiatives not only strengthen regional economies but also create clear pathways for Maryland residents into high-demand, family-sustaining careers.

By aligning economic development incentives, infrastructure investments, and innovation strategies, House Bill 898 helps ensure that Maryland remains competitive in attracting and growing key industries while supporting a strong and responsive workforce system. Maryland's community colleges stand ready to continue working in partnership with the Administration, the Department of Commerce, and industry leaders to implement these initiatives and meet the State's workforce and economic development goals. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB 898**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.