



Senate Bill 577

Economic Development - Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance and Budget and Taxation
Committees

Date: February 23, 2021

From: Alex Butler and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 577. This bill creates a grant program to help counties, nonprofits, and other eligible applicants establish or expand makerspaces.

Makerspaces provide the space and means for community members to design, prototype, and manufacture items using tools that would otherwise be inaccessible or unaffordable such as 3-D printers, digital fabrication machines, and computer-aided design software.

This bill establishes the Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program within the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) in order to provide matching funds to local governments, nonprofits, and other eligible applicants for the establishment or expansion of makerspaces in the state.

Under this program, a wide range of technology improvements could be expected – from health care equipment to computer-assisted design to small-scale manufacturing technologies. The flexibility in the grant program could spark innovations that match needs of local employers or harness regional interests from different parts of the state.

The bill could spark economic development and promote diverse and vibrant business communities within our counties. This in turn creates jobs, contributes to enhancing quality of life, and expands the local tax base – enabling counties to better provide core services for Maryland families and businesses.

SB 577 creates an efficient and effective system for leveraging state and local resources to support creative enterprises in Maryland. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 577.