

Delia

SB802

FAVORABLE



One University. A World of Experiences.

To: Chairman Delores Kelley, Finance Committee
From: Al Delia, Vice President of Regional Development and Engagement
Date: Tuesday, March 16, 2021
Re: SB 802 – Economic Development – Maryland Innovation Initiative University Expansion Pilot Program – Establishment

Frostburg State University has been pleased to be an active member on the Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland which identified several key initiatives to both jump start and sustain the evolution of the new economy for the region. The Maryland Innovation Initiative, created by the General Assembly in 2012, is designed to leverage the commercialization skills and resources of TEDCO with the research and discovery that occurs in the State’s research institutions. It has been limited to research institutions – Johns Hopkins, Morgan State, UMCP, UMBC, and UMB. Participating universities contribute to the MII fund, which supports the work of “site miners”: experts who work with faculty and researchers to identify discoveries and inventions with commercialization possibility.

Through the work of the Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland, it was obvious that Frostburg plays a critical role as an anchor institution and thought leader, although we do not have the basic research disciplines that are evident in other institutions of the state. In speaking with TEDCO, we developed slightly revised criteria for MII investments that would allow FSU to participate. FSU would make a somewhat smaller contribution to the program, and the ability to partner with private business on the creation of a marketable idea is broadened.

Entrepreneurship and innovation happens anywhere, and a modest investment and targeted and time-limited expansion of a highly successful program like MII will allow Frostburg and its environs to enjoy the same economic successes tied to academic achievement as occurs in other parts of the state. FSU has had recent success in areas of sustainable energy and resiliency, including having been awarded an inaugural Resilient Maryland pilot grant of \$100,000 from the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to plan a campus-scale microgrid that will bolster campus energy resilience, further sustainability goals and provide students with real-world applied learning opportunities. A microgrid is a local energy grid that can disconnect from the traditional grid and operate autonomously.

For more information, contact Mary E. Clapsaddle, Director of Government Relations at 410-562-2838
FSU is a constituent institution of the University System of Maryland

FSU is partnering with Optimize Renewables, an energy-systems planning, design, development and finance firm, to be able to leverage the project to help displaced Allegany County workers and others in the region transition to the clean energy industry. The University has named Optimize president Len Jornlin an Entrepreneur-in-Residence. Another recent example is our partnership with Delmock Technologies, a Baltimore-based certified HUBZone business that provides complex mission-critical IT and health solutions, which in December held a ribbon cutting at its new location at the Advanced Technology Center at Frostburg State University.

I urge a FAVORABLE Committee Report on SB802.

Cc: Senators Edwards and Corderman, sponsors