



Senate Bill 453

Economic Development – Maryland Makerspace Initiative Program

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance and Budget & Taxation Committees

Date: February 15, 2022

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 453. 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) 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, counties could expect a wide range of technology improvements – 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 stimulate 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 453 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 453.