



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

KRISTERFER BURNETT, 8TH DISTRICT

Room 553, City Hall

100 N Holliday Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Office (410) 396-4818 Fax (410) 396-4828

March 28, 2022

Re: Makerspace Initiative Pilot Program

Senate Bill 0453: Economic Development – Maryland Makerspace Initiative Program (SUPPORT)

Senate Ways & Means Committee

Dear Chair & Members of the Ways & Means Committee,

On behalf of District 8, I want to urge committee members to **vote favorable on SB0453: Economic Development – Maryland Makerspace Initiative Program** that will establish the Maryland Makerspace Initiative Program in the Maryland Technology Development Corporation; authorizing the Corporation to partner with a certain entity to provide technical assistance to certain nonprofit 6 entities and to award certain financial assistance, subject to certain requirements, for the establishment, expansion, and operation of makerspaces in the State; establishing the Maryland Makerspace Initiative Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; requiring interest earnings of the Fund to be credited to the Fund; providing that certain appropriations and expenditures are subject to audit by the Office of Legislative Audits; and generally relating to the Maryland Makerspace Initiative Program.

I strongly believe that other communities in Maryland can derive similar benefits by building makerspaces, especially as communities struggle to dig out of the interlocking economic, educational, and health crises triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, creating a network of public makerspaces will scale additional operational efficiencies and funding opportunities. The proposed legislation creates a non-lapsing fund to be administered by TEDCO that would support the expansion and establishment of further makerspaces in the State of Maryland, significantly scaling the current impacts of Open Works' current location. Creating a network of five locations would have the following impacts:

Economic Impact

- In 2019, state and local tax revenues generated by Open Works and associated businesses topped \$450,000.
- Five locations will produce \$45M in annual economic impact, \$2.25M in annual tax revenues, and 600 jobs through direct employment and startup creation.

Educational Impact

- In 2019, Open Works enrolled 1,339 adults and 171 youth in technical education classes.
- 5 locations could educate 6,700 adults and 850 youth annually.

Emergency Resilience

- Based on Open Works' experience with Makers Unite, we could organize a civil manufacturing
- reserve to provide supply chain resilience in case of natural disaster, terror attack, or pandemic.

Workforce Development

- In late 2021, Open Works was awarded \$223,000 from the City of Baltimore to run a two-year apprenticeship program for industrial sewing machine operators.
- 5 locations will provide the scale to address the diverse workforce needs of manufacturers and tech companies across the state and better compete with Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., and Virginia.

Constructing a makerspace network would immediately catapult Maryland into a national leadership role in cultivating an innovation economy, and have profound implications on the next 25 years of economic growth, workforce development, STEM educational excellence, disaster preparedness, and startup activity.

For these reasons, **I encourage a favorable vote on SB0453!** Please feel free to reach out to me with any additional questions or concerns you may have. I can be reached at kristofer.burnett@baltimorecity.org

Sincerely,



Councilmember Kristofer Burnett