



February 15, 2024

Dear Chairwoman Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I'm writing today to express my support of Senate Bill 516 for the Maryland Aerospace & Technology Commission.

Maryland has been the anchor of American Aerospace since the very beginning. In 1909, the Wright Brothers taught the first US military pilots how to fly in the oldest airport in the world, College Park Airport. Today Maryland has the most federal R&D spending in the US and twice as many federal labs as any other state. We don't hear about it much, but almost 10,000 aerospace companies call Maryland home, and Maryland has the highest concentration of aerospace engineers in the country. Whether it's exploring the universe with space telescopes, understanding how our climate is changing with Earth science data, or preparing for a future of autonomous aviation, the over 140,000 aerospace workers in Maryland are continuing to set the tone for our nation's aerospace endeavors.

I moved to Maryland after school to work on these space missions, and I've spent the last ten years working as an aerospace engineer at a small business in Lanham, while spending personal time advocating for Maryland facilities on Capital Hill. I co-founded the Maryland Aerospace Alliance because we need your help. Other states are competing to take away these national capabilities that Maryland has held for decades, and we need a structure similar to what Florida, Texas, and Virginia have built to pull all the stakeholders together and fund initiatives to maximize the impact of federal and commercial investment. We need an organization that better connects our ever-changing industry with our educational system to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of our state and is prepared to meet the challenges of new technologies like machine learning, AI, augmented reality and model-based systems engineering. We need to advertise to potential employers and employees that Maryland is an Aerospace State. The Maryland Aerospace & Technology Commission will do all of these things.

Let's make sure that Maryland remains #1 in Aerospace, and let's stop keeping it a secret. I ask you to support Senator Washington on Senate Bill 516.

Sincerely,

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