

15 February 2024



RE: Testimony before the Maryland Senate Finance Committee

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

I am an Aerospace Engineer and for most of my 40-year career have lived and worked in Maryland in the aerospace industry in small and large businesses. I am also the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of MERC Aerospace, a Woman-Owned Small Business, which does business in the State of Maryland for organizations such as Goddard Space Flight Center, Applied Physics Laboratory and Aberdeen.

The major Federal budget cuts being proposed and enacted will have a devastating impact not only on small and large businesses, it will also have a symbiotic impact on Maryland's ability to attract and develop high tech workers that contribute to the current tax revenue base. Without robust Federal Funding, those private sector jobs will cease to exist and with it the revenue base that Maryland has come to rely upon.

The growth of any national, state, and local economy is predicated on a robust research and development sector and the technologies created by the activities of those persons employed. These technologies that they create are then spun off into the private sector of Maryland and our nation, creating a depth of new feeder industries that also contribute to making our business sector more productive and more attractive to foreign partnerships and investment opportunities.

This economic engine starts with Federal funding. This multiplier effect has profound impacts as has been reported many times in the past. Chase Econometrics conducted a study and found that for every dollar that NASA spends in their budgets, more than 10 dollars are returned to the private sector. An example today can be seen with SpaceX's rocket systems as they have their origin in the Federally funded development of NASA's 1960's rocket technologies. This science driven ecosystem is good for every township in the State of Maryland and beyond. Without these science and technology driven budget priorities at the Federal level, the economic opportunities for the State of Maryland and it's citizens will stagnate. This reduction will also create job losses, reduction in tax revenue base, decreased investments and major downward pressure on the housing market.



Without the Maryland Statehouse stepping up to the plate and making it's voice heard we cannot reverse this trend and claim the economic rights due to all Marylanders and the United States at large. Without protecting the R&D sector of Maryland and the Federal funding that fuels that economic growth and the multiplier that goes with it, Maryland's economic future is in jeopardy.

Please vote favorably for Senate Bill SB0516, Economic Development – Maryland Aerospace and Technology Commission.

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