



March 21, 2024

Chair Vanessa Atterbeary
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
Position: **Support**

**Testimony in Favor of Maryland Economic Development Commission Alterations
(SB209)**

Before the House Ways & Means Committee
On behalf of the Maryland Economic Development Commission

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee; **the Maryland Economic Development Commission (MEDC) supports Senate Bill 209**, which makes small but necessary changes to the Commission's membership and updates reporting requirements for two offices and boards within the Department of Commerce.

MEDC was founded in 1995 as an advisory body for Commerce, the Governor, and the Maryland General Assembly. Since then, the 25-voting member Commission has worked closely with business experts and state officials to craft economic development policy recommendations to promote the growth and retention of state businesses and jobs based on comprehensive evaluations of Maryland's business climate.

SB209 requires that the MEDC's membership include at least one representative of the life science industry and at least one of the manufacturing industry—critical sectors upon which a significant part of the state's future economic development strategy depends. MEDC wholeheartedly welcomes their engagement.

Additionally, SB209 repeals requirements that:

- the Office of International Trade reports to MEDC two times a year,
- the Maryland Tourism Development Board presents its strategic plan to MEDC, and
- MEDC incorporates the strategic plan the Maryland Port Administration developed for the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore into the State economic development strategic plan.

Removing these requirements gives MEDC and the aforementioned bodies the flexibility to present information as needed, instead of giving regular updates when it may not be necessary, and allows MEDC to better tailor its strategic plan toward Maryland's top economic priorities.

For those reasons, MEDC respectfully urges a favorable report on SB209. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.