

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Tom Jarboe, Commissioner
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

March 15, 2018

Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr, *President of Senate*
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

Re: Support for the Academic and Research Facility at Southern Maryland Higher Education Center

Dear Senator President Miller:

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County request your continued support for the planned academic and research facility at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center, which is a key component to our economic ecosystem and a future asset of the University System of Maryland. To keep the project on track to open by 2020, \$27.865 million is needed in the State's Fiscal Year 2019 Capital Budget.

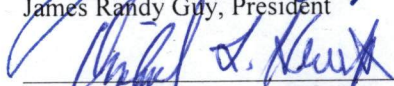
Please reject the DLS recommendation to cut the capital funding for the USM Southern Maryland Higher Education, Engineering and Research Center. This project is slated to begin construction this summer and with the SMHEC/USM merger will create an unprecedented opportunity to support new educational, training and certification opportunities for students and the workforce throughout Southern Maryland, further drive STEM-related research and development, particularly in the growing field of unmanned and autonomous systems, and promote greater economic innovation and diversification across the region.

The County's unwavering commitment is demonstrated by a \$1 million local appropriation in FY2016. This project will transform Southern Maryland as a top priority for the Navy, the private technology community in St. Mary's County, and our confidence in the economic development benefits it will bring to the Southern Maryland Region and the entire State of Maryland.

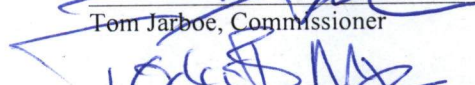
Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Dr. Rebecca Bridgett, County Administrator, should you need further clarification or additional information.

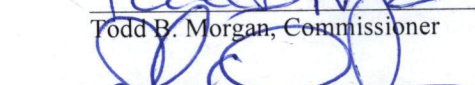
Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


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CSMC/rb/sf
T:ALL/Consent/2018/043

Cc: Governor Larry Hogan
Congressman Steny Hoyer
Senator Stephen Waugh
Delegate Deborah Rey
Delegate Matt Morgan
Delegate Gerald Clark
Rebecca Bridgett, County Administrator
David Weiskopf, Acting County Attorney