



# Governor's Economic Competitiveness Subcabinet

*The mission of the subcabinet is to advise the Governor on, and identify and recommend policies, regulations, strategies, and actions that strengthen Maryland's economic competitiveness and growth on an ongoing basis; review proposed policies and procedures by executive departments and agencies impacting economic development and workforce development; coordinate the implementation of executive directives and legislation that support business and talent development in the state; track the progress of the cross-agency implementation of the Economic Strategic Plan approved by the Maryland Economic Development Commission; track the progress of the cross-agency implementation of the economic goals under the Moore-Miller Administration's Maryland State Plan; and on a biannual basis, develop and publish a consolidated economic competitiveness plan that incorporates strategies and action plans from every executive department and agency represented on the Subcabinet.*

## Members

**Agriculture (AG)**

**Secretary Kevin Atticks (Steve Connelly & Martin Proulx)**

**Budget and Management (DBM)**

**Acting Secretary Jake Weissmann (Richard Auxier)**

**Commerce**

**Secretary Harry Coker, Chair, (Judy L. Smith)**

**Education**

**State Superintendent of Schools Carey Wright (Lisa Sparr & Alex Reese)**

**Environment (MDE)**

**Secretary Serena McIlwain (Scott Goldman)**

**General Services**

**Secretary Atif Chaudhry (Daniel Chase)**

**Governor's Office of Small, Minority, and Women's Affairs (GOSBA)**

**Secretary Y. Maria Martinez, (Eduardo Hayden)**

**Higher Education Commission (MHEC)**

**Secretary Sanjay Rai**

**Housing & Community Development (DHCD)**

**Secretary Jake Day (Brad Fallon)**

**Labor**

**Secretary Portia Wu (Ashley Sharp)**

**Maryland Clean Energy Center**

**Executive Director Katherine Magruder (Mary Sirios & Pamela Powers)**

**Maryland Economic Development Corporation**

**Executive Director Tom Sadowski**

**Maryland Technology Development Corporation**

**CEO Troy LeMaile-Stovall**

**Natural Resources (DNR)**

**Secretary Josh Kurtz (David Goshorn)**

**Planning (MDP)**

**Secretary Rebecca Flora (Darius White)**

**State (SoS)**

**Secretary Susan Lee (Alexandria Liu & Michael Lore)**

**Transportation**

**Acting Secretary Samantha J. Biddle (Joe McAndrew & David Zaidan)**

**University System of Maryland (USM)**

**Chancellor Dr. Jay Perman (Diane Walters)**

**November 17, 2025**  
**401 E. Pratt Street, 17th Floor Conference Room, Baltimore Maryland 21202**  
**1:00 – 3:00pm**  
**Minutes**

**Attendance**

Note: Names in parentheses denote designees or alternates for members of the Subcabinet.

Subcabinet:

- Harry Coker (Judy L. Smith), Chair, Commerce
- Kevin Atticks (Martin Proulx), Agriculture
- Samantha J. Biddle (David Zaidan), Transportation (MDOT)
- Jake Day (Brad Fallon)
- Rebecca Flora, Planning (MDP)
- Susan Lee (Michael Lore), State (SoS)
- Y. Maria Martinez, (Eduardo Hayden), GOSBA
- Katherine Magruder, Maryland Clean Energy Center
- Serena McIlwain, MDE
- Jay Perman, USM
- Sanjay Rai (Karen King-Sheridan), MHEC
- Tom Sadowski, MEDCO
- Jake Weissmann (Richard Auxier), Budget and Management
- Portia Wu, Labor

Guests:

- Katie Abbott
- Laurel Cratsley
- Suzanne Dorsey
- Laura Gutierrez
- Michael Lore
- Michelle Masucci
- Acting Secretary Walter L. Simmons, DOSEM
- Darius White
- Jamie Williams
- Bob Zimberoff

Commerce:

- Ricardo Benn
- Afiya Bey
- Cori Duggins
- Mary Hanley
- Tamar Osterman
- Brigitte Peters
- Stephen Rice
- Sarah Sheppard
- Judy L. Smith

## **I. Meeting Called to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Department of Commerce Chief Strategy Officer, Judy L. Smith. Ms. Smith shared that she would be standing in for Secretary Coker who is currently engaged in a trade mission to Canada.

## **II. October 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes Approval**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting minutes from October 20, 2025 were approved.

## **III. Action Item Review and Status**

Ms. Afiya Bey reviewed the status of action items from the October 20, 2025 meeting.

## **IV. Discussion – Chair’s Report**

Ms. Smith reported on the following topics:

- Commerce is currently in Phase II of strategic planning. The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Strategic Plan was released on Thursday, November 13, 2025. Development of the draft FY26 Implementation Plan is underway. The strategic plan, which includes activities, timelines, outcomes, measures of success, and points of contact is being socialized with the goal of having a final draft by November 30, 2025.
- Commerce is moving forward with the Loaned Executive Program pilot, a requirement of the same Executive Order that established the Subcabinet. Deloitte provided 2 candidates for the Organizational Construct pilot. Commerce will provide the Subcabinet with updates on its progress.
- Secretary Coker is undertaking trade missions, currently to Canada and with a trip planned to the Middle East in December. The current mission to Canada includes engagements with ministers in Quebec and Ontario. Secretary Coker is leading a delegation of eight companies, with Secretary Susan Lee also accompanying him. These trips underscore the long-standing relationships with both Canada and the Middle East.
  - Secretary McIlwain shared that she will be joining Secretary Coker on the trade mission to Canada the following day.
- As of November 12, 2025, Commerce’s pipeline of active attraction, expansion and FDI opportunities is summarized as follows:
  - 45 total opportunities, each representing at least 50 new and/or at-risk jobs
    - 19 attractions, 16 expansions and 10 foreign direct
    - investments
    - 10,388 potential new jobs and 1,501 potential at-risk jobs
    - \$15.8 billion in potential new capital expenditure
  - 4 new opportunities were added to the pipeline in October 2025

- 3 attractions, 1 expansion and 0 foreign direct investments
- 470 potential new jobs and x at-risk jobs
- \$41.7 million in potential new capital expenditure
- 1 opportunity was closed/won in October 2025

## **V. Discussion – Caroline and Kent Counties: Challenges and Themes**

County visits across the state continue and Caroline and Kent county representatives joined the meeting to discuss their challenges. The objective is to provide an opportunity for the Subcabinet to hear directly from the County representatives. Jamie Williams, Director, Economic and Tourism Development Kent County and Bob Zimberoff Director, Caroline County Economic Development & Tourism thanked the Subcabinet for the opportunity to present their experiences and challenges and shared a 1-page jointly presented document for discussion.

### **Caroline County: Challenges and Themes**

Mr. Zimberoff shared the following perspectives:

- The 10% match for the Maryland Economic Development Assistance and Authority Fund (MEDAAF) is an administrative concern, as the process takes too long and without the authority to make timely decisions, businesses move on.
- Several businesses expressed interest in growing their staff but found the income tax credit too difficult to administer. Challenges include tracking all the requirements, HR staff bandwidth limitations, and the requirement to retain staff for a specific duration which is complicated by turnover.
- Businesses considering Caroline and Kent Counties face competition with Northern Virginia and Delaware, where incentives are generally perceived as more favorable. Companies are not primarily seeking tax incentives but rather liquidity support in the form of loans and grants, specifically requesting low-interest, backed and bonded loans.

### **Kent County: Challenges and Themes**

Ms. Williams shared the following perspectives:

- Delays in permitting are directly tied to increased costs, stalling projects, and hindering overall economic growth. These delays have slowed construction, affected the tourism industry, and placed a significant strain on industry investors and small business owners.
- The housing sector is particularly affected, and rising registration fees are adding financial pressure on both families and businesses.

- While the Maryland Permitting Review Council is a positive step, it does not adequately address the needs of small to medium-sized businesses, which are critical components of the economy.

Proposed Changes and Solutions Presented by Ms. Williams:

- A centralized online permitting portal for all state, county, and municipal approvals.
- Standardized requirements across jurisdictions to reduce confusion and support business expansion.
- Clear time limits for reviews to ensure predictable timelines.
- Regular review and modernization of regulations to eliminate outdated requirements.
- Transparency and communication through online dashboards and automatic updates.

Members of the Subcabinet thanked Mr. Zimberoff and Ms. Williams for sharing their insights and experiences and asked clarifying questions. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed solutions.

- Executive Director Magruder expressed concurrence that incentives often adopt a uniform approach, and it may be necessary to examine incentives that are also tailored to the needs of smaller businesses.
- Secretary Flora shared an update on the Permitting Review Council. To better understand various systems, monthly presentations from local permitting authorities have been initiated. In addition to these efforts, the Council is working on creating a dashboard and collaborating with the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo). Within the discovery phase, system issues have been identified and highlighted the long-term need for funding to build out a necessary system. Without this funding, the Council cannot achieve its long-term goals.
- Executive Director Tom Sadowski suggested consulting with the nearly 900 attendees of the recent Small Business Summit for additional feedback.

- **Actions:**

- Secretary Wu will connect with Ms. Williams regarding FAMLI (Maryland Family and Medical Leave Insurance program) challenges and Third Party Administrators.
- Ms. Williams will send her summary list of recommendations to Commerce.

## VI. Summary of the Maryland Economic Council (MEC) Annual Report

Ms. Afiya Bey provided a summary of the Maryland Economic Council (MEC) Annual Report submitted to the Governor's Office. The report offers a progress update on the

2024 recommendations, analyzes the state's current economic factors, and outlines new recommendations for 2025. The report highlighted three key recommendations for Maryland's long-term competitiveness:

1. Significant Regulatory Reform
2. Address High Energy Costs
3. Secure an Anchor AI Tenant

Commerce is working internally to prepare the report as a digital flipbook for its website with publication anticipated for mid-December.

- **Action:** Ms. Bey will share the MEC 2025 Annual Report with the Subcabinet.

## **VII. Discussion – Biannual Report Update**

Ms. Mary Hanley provided an update regarding the Biannual Consolidated Economic Competitiveness Plan. She presented the revised timeline, outlined the objectives, identified the lead agency for each goal, and introduced the list of co-developers who will contribute to the goal and support the lead agency.

Subcabinet members requested the addition of the Maryland Clean Energy Center as a co-developer for Goal Five and MEDCO for Goal Four. Ms. Smith further emphasized the importance of ensuring that members of the Subcabinet contribute feedback during the development of the biannual plan, and she encouraged them to continue offering their input.

- **Action:** Commerce will share the Biannual Report Update slides with the Subcabinet.

## **VIII. Good of the Order**

- Deputy Secretary Michael Lore shared that the COMAR updates presented at the previous GECS meeting are now live.
- Secretary Portia Wu reported that federal shutdown impact statistics will be released in December. Notably, 5,000 people filed for unemployment during the shutdown which will need to be repaid upon receiving back pay, and 2,500 Marylanders applied for loans, with nearly 2,000 approved for extended repayment. The Department of Labor continues to monitor GDP.
- Mr. Martin Proulx shared the recently released Statewide Guidance and Analysis: “Maryland’s Value-Added Agriculture and Agritourism” prepared by Maryland Department of Agriculture.

## **IX. Summary of Key Decisions and Actions**

Ms. Smith highlighted several follow-up actions resulting from the meeting.

### **Action items for follow-up:**

- Jamie Williams: To submit her list of recommendations to Commerce (Afiya Bey).
- Commerce (Afiya Bey): To distribute Mary Hanley's Biannual Plan update slides and the MEC Annual Report to the Subcabinet.
- Department of Labor: To directly coordinate with Jamie Williams concerning Third Party Administrators and challenges with FAMLI (Maryland Family and Medical Leave Insurance program).

## **X. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.