



# 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

<b>Agriculture (AG)</b>	<b>Secretary Kevin Atticks (Steve Connelly &amp; Martin Proulx)</b>
<b>Budget and Management (DBM)</b>	<b>Secretary Jake Weissmann (Richard Auxier)</b>
<b>Commerce</b>	<b>Secretary Harry Coker, Chair (Judy L. Smith)</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>State Superintendent of Schools Carey Wright (Phil Lasser &amp; Alex Reese)</b>
<b>Maryland Energy Administration (MEA)</b>	<b>Director Kelly Speakes-Backman (Jenn Aiosa)</b>
<b>Environment (MDE)</b>	<b>Secretary Serena McIlwain (Scott Goldman)</b>
<b>General Services</b>	<b>Secretary Atif Chaudhry (Daniel Chase)</b>
<b>Department of Social and Economic Mobility (DoSEM)</b>	<b>Secretary Walter Simmons</b>
<b>Higher Education Commission (MHEC)</b>	<b>Secretary Sanjay Rai</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Community Development (DHCD)</b>	<b>Secretary Jake Day (Brad Fallon)</b>
<b>Labor</b>	<b>Secretary Portia Wu (Ashley Sharp)</b>
<b>Maryland Clean Energy Center</b>	<b>Executive Director Katherine Magruder (Mary Sirios &amp; Pamela Powers)</b>
<b>Maryland Economic Development Corporation</b>	<b>Executive Director Tom Sadowski</b>
<b>Maryland Technology Development Corporation</b>	<b>CEO Troy LeMaile-Stovall</b>
<b>Natural Resources (DNR)</b>	<b>Secretary Josh Kurtz (David Goshorn)</b>
<b>Planning (MDP)</b>	<b>Secretary Rebecca Flora (Darius White)</b>
<b>State (SoS)</b>	<b>Secretary Susan Lee (Alexandria Liu &amp; Michael Lore)</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Secretary Kathryn Thomson (Joe McAndrew &amp; David Zaidan)</b>
<b>University System of Maryland (USM)</b>	<b>Chancellor Dr. Jay Perman (Diane Walters)</b>

**March 16, 2026**  
**Virtual**  
**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, Agriculture
- Jake Day (Brad Fallon), DHCD
- Rebecca Flora, Planning
- Josh Kurtz, DNR
- Katherine Magruder, MCEC
- Serena McIlwain, MDE
- Sanjay Rai, MHEC
- Jay Perman, USM
- Kathryn Thomson (David Zaidain), MDOT
- Tom Sadowski, MEDCO
- Walter Simmons, DoSEM
- Kelly Speakes-Backman, MEA
- Jake Weissmann (Richard Auxier), DBM
- Carey Wright (Phil Lasser), Education
- Portia Wu, Labor

Guests:

- Amy Gowan
- Shannon Harcum
- Eduardo Hayden
- Julien Jacques
- Karen King-Sheridan
- Secretary Susan Lee
- Alexandria Liu
- Lucas Lin
- Jared Littmann
- Michael Lore
- Tiffany Majors
- Michelle Masucci
- Ashley Sharp
- Burr Vogel

Commerce:

- Ricardo Benn
- Afiya Bey
- Cori Duggins
- April Doss
- John Gilstrap

- Mary Hanley
- Mayank Kapur
- Carrie Long
- Tamar Osterman
- Stephen Rice

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Ms. Judy L. Smith who shared that she would be presiding over the meeting in the absence of Secretary Coker.

## **II. Welcome**

Ms. Shannon Harcum, Chief Operating Officer of Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, thanked the state for their commitment and leadership to Maryland and specifically noted Secretary Coker's recent visit to the Annapolis City Dock Project. She also shared background on the role of tourism and local commerce in fueling economic development within the City before introducing Mayor Jared S. Littman.

## **III. Mayor of Annapolis**

City of Annapolis Mayor Jared S. Littmann provided an overview of the City Dock Project and its vision led by the City Dock Action Committee. The Committee was created in 2019 in collaboration with the City, County, and State with over 100 stakeholders.

The two goals for the project are:

- Stop downtown flooding.
- Reinvigorate the area as an economic driver.

The City Dock Action Committee's Consensus Plan has been endorsed by the City Council, Planning Commission, Critical Area Commission, Maryland Historic Preservation, and others. Mr. Burr Vogel, Director of Public Works, shared information regarding the Resilience Approach and its planned phases.

The project requires urgent support due to significant flood risks. Annapolis experienced over 124 flooding events in 2024, with economic costs projected to exceed \$125 million by 2055 if major mitigation efforts are not implemented. The team is currently seeking investments from partners.

Subcabinet members extended their congratulations on the significant progress achieved and expressed gratitude for their diligence.

## **IV. February 23, 2026 Meeting Minutes Approval**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting minutes from February 23, 2026 were approved.

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

Ms. Afiya Bey reviewed the status of action items from the February 23, 2026 meeting.

## **VI. Discussion – Chair's Report**

Ms. Smith reported on the following topics:

- The FY26 Commerce Implementation Planning initiatives for each goal and objective have been developed and are being reviewed internal to Commerce. A draft of the FY26 initiatives will be shared with the GECS during the April meeting.
- Commerce has kicked-off its Moonshot Initiative and is currently in the discovery phase generating clear vision and objectives for each moonshot. These moonshots will be vetted and then finalized in an informational briefing to be shared with the GECS, eventually being shared with potential investors.
- A follow-on meeting is being scheduled with the foundational partners of the Integrated Economic Development Construct Review to levelset expectations for the initiative. The next step is to finalize a statement of work to procure a contractor to support the effort.
- Commerce has gathered and compiled feedback from the Subcabinet in the effort to review Executive Order 01.01.2024.39. Commerce will share an update at the April GECS meeting.
- The Loaned Executive Program, established by the same Executive Order 01.01.2024.39, is on schedule, with its website anticipated to launch by early April. Pursuant to the Executive Order, Commerce will be the initial Maryland department to implement the new website, although the site is designed for use across all departments.
- The recent county tours included Talbot County, which showcased the county's arts, cultural, and historical assets, including a visit to Frederick Douglass Park, a county asset with plans for expansion, partnership, and interpretation. In Somerset County, the tour began at Janes Island, an important driver of tourism. The day ended at the Princess Anne Industrial Park and toured the space recently leased by Kratos Defense, which has three other locations in Maryland, to expand their work in Hypersonics, Propulsion & Power, and Unmanned Systems.
- Commerce is actively pursuing deliverables from recent trade missions. This involves significant follow-up at key international events such as the RSA Conference (March), the SelectUSA Investment Summit (May), and the BIO International Convention (June). Engagement at these forums is crucial for connecting with foreign companies, promoting Maryland's attractive business climate, highlighting competitive strengths in sectors like cybersecurity and life sciences, and ultimately, securing investments that will stimulate statewide economic growth and job creation.
  - Secretary Wu offered her support for the SelectUSA Investment Summit.
- Recent pipeline successes encompassed 38 total opportunities, each representing a minimum of 50 new and/or at-risk employment positions. There were four new opportunities that were closed/won in February 2026:
  - Syngene
  - Clym Environmental
  - Saval Foods
  - Lufburrow
- **Actions:** Commerce to present at the next GECS meeting:
  - The draft of the FY26 Implementation Plan Initiatives
  - An update on the EO 01.01.2024.39 Review Initiative

## VII. Discussion – Anne Arundel County: Challenges and Themes

In support of the state’s aim to build a collaborative economic development ecosystem for growth, Ms. Amy Gowan, President/CEO of the Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corporation was invited to present the challenges and opportunities within the county.

Major economic assets include North County Industrial BWI Airport, Fort Meade Cyber & DOD, Arundel Mills Entertainment District, City of Annapolis, Two Medical Campuses and over 500 miles of Coastline.

- BWI Marshall Airport is a major logistics hub with an \$11.3 billion economic impact.
  - State support is needed for Sustainable Tourism Marketing.
- Strategic priorities focus on strengthening the cyber workforce and improving local infrastructure.
- Housing and transportation planning should align job density closer to resident mobility.
  - Improve regional access to Fort Meade.
- Business and Innovation Support
  - Strengthen the regional innovation ecosystem.
  - Expand early-stage capital access, including angel and venture funding.
  - Support opportunities for companies to pilot emerging technologies in real-world environments, accelerating commercialization.
- Childcare is a workforce challenge due to strict regulations and unsustainable provider costs. State reforms needed:
  - Streamline regulations to make early childhood care financially viable (simplify EXCELS system).
  - Provide grants (not loans) for capital improvements.
  - TrueUp reconciliation reforms to ensure timely reimbursements.
  - Streamline Background Checks to address staffing shortage.
  - Central hub for MSDE requirements.

There was a brief discussion regarding a new moratorium impacting childcare. The Subcabinet expressed appreciation for Ms. Gowan's presentation and collaboration on these efforts.

- **Action:** Ms. Bey will follow up to distribute Ms. Gowan’s slides and handout to the Subcabinet.

## VIII. Discussion - Rural Communities

Ms. Smith shared the purpose of the Rural Communities Discussion is to coordinate a response to address challenges and incentives for rural communities in follow up to the February GECS meeting where Ms. Melanie Pursel, Director, Tourism & Economic Development for Worcester County presented.

The subsequent discussion led to the following key points:

## Core Challenges

- **Transportation Access:** Lack of transport is a critical barrier preventing rural residents from accessing jobs, education, and healthcare. Public transportation is difficult to sustain in rural areas due to low ridership and heavy reliance on grants.
- **Capacity Gap:** The primary obstacle is a lack of capacity; rural areas have insufficient resources to hire personnel for planning, economic development, and grant management.
- **Communication and Resources:** Communication gaps between counties and municipalities.
- **Regulatory Obstruction:** State programs are hindered by slow permits and processes. Restrictions like Critical Areas preservation, while beneficial, can disadvantage the state in attracting certain businesses.
- **Mindset:** Rural communities often feel ignored and experience distrust towards governmental bodies, preferring to be "left alone".

The group converged on the need to establish a GECS Rural Communities Subgroup.

- **Action:** Establish a Rural Communities GECS Subgroup to address challenges and incentives. The first task will be to develop a group charter and include members who volunteered to participate.

## IX. Discussion – Biannual Report Update

Ms. Mary Hanley presented an update on the GECS Consolidated Competitiveness Plan. Members of the working group submitted initiatives from their respective departments/agencies through a Request for Information (RFI) process. The strategy document, which will be a public, high-level document, will highlight these initiatives and their desired economic impact on the State of Maryland. The internal implementation plan will contain a fully detailed timeline and tasks for each initiative. Each initiative was initially categorized as Foundational, Operational, or Catalytic. Submissions that did not fit into these categories were categorized as a lever, defined as a resource, capability, or tool that can be used in the implementation of one or multiple other initiatives.

The working group will meet later this week to review these category recommendations, which are not yet finalized. The goal is to finalize the categories by the end of March, after which they will be shared for feedback via survey.

## X. Summary of Key Decisions and Actions

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

### Action items for follow-up:

- Commerce to distribute Ms. Amy Gowan's slides and handout to the Subcabinet.
- Commerce to present at the next GECS meeting:
  - The draft of the FY26 Implementation Plan Initiatives
  - An update on the EO 01.01.2024.39 Review Initiative

- Establish a Rural Communities GECS Subgroup to address challenges and incentives:
  - Develop a group charter and include members who volunteered to participate.

## **XI. Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.