



Tuesday, July 15, 2025

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology

2nd floor, Multi-Purpose Room

701 East Pratt St., Baltimore, MD, 21202

Meeting Minutes

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Jay Perman gave opening remarks and reviewed the ground rules of the meeting. He called the meeting to order and carried out a roll call to confirm attendance.

Board Members in Attendance

1. Jay Perman, MD – Chancellor, University System Maryland [Chair]
2. Trushar Agrawal – Senior Director, Head of Manufacturing, Kite Pharma
3. Richard A. Bendis – President and CEO, BioHealth Innovation, Inc.
4. Nawal Benmouna, PhD – Vice President of STEM and Health Sciences and Interim VP of Workforce Development and Industry Partnerships, Montgomery College
5. Harry Coker, Jr. – Secretary, Maryland Department of Commerce [ex officio]
6. Rebecca Fisher, PhD – Deputy Director, Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command
7. Mark Mortenson, JD – Chief Scientific Officer, Clene Nanomedicine
8. Deborah D. Ricker, PhD – President, Hood College
9. Bob Storey – Principal, The MVR Company, Managing Director, LaunchPort [Vice Chair]
10. Christy Wyskiel – Senior Advisor to the President and Executive Director Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures, Johns Hopkins University

Department of Commerce Attendees

1. John Gilstrap – Assistant Secretary
2. Ulyana Desiderio, PhD – Sr. Director, Office of Strategic Industries and Entrepreneurship
3. Stefanie Trop, PhD – Director, Life Sciences
4. Matthew Cimino, PhD – Senior Manager, Business Development, Life Sciences
5. Bradley Gillenwater – Business & Innovation Development Manager, Life Sciences

General Public Attendees

1. Mike Gibney – PharmaVoice
2. Sam Hopkins – Mind Over Machines
3. Bradley Maron, MD – University of Maryland, Institute for Health Computing
4. Michele Masucci, PhD – University System of Maryland
5. Magdalena Tagliaferro – Department of Labor, Office of Strategic Initiatives

Dr. Perman reminded everyone about the Board charge to maintain Maryland's unique place in the global life sciences industry and reviewed the meeting's agenda.

Review and Acceptance of April 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Dr. Perman asked for feedback on the minutes of the April 22, 2025 LSAB meeting.

Hearing none, Dr. Perman asked for a motion to approve the minutes, which was made by Mr. Mortenson and seconded by Mr. Bendis. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Review of 2025 BIO International Convention

The BIO International Convention was held in Boston, June 16-19, 2025. Commerce hosted the Maryland Pavilion for business attraction and as a meeting point for Commerce staff and partners; sponsored a delegation of 15 Maryland companies to attend with Premier Access Passes; provided 20 Exhibit Hall Passes to additional Maryland companies and partners; and sponsored the Maryland Networking Reception. Twelve Commerce staff attended, including Secretary Harry Coker, Jr., Deputy Secretary Ricardo Benn, and Assistant Secretary John Gilstrap. Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller, as well as Gov. Moore's Deputy Chief of Staff Manny Welsh and Lt. Gov. Miller's Chief of Staff Geri Byrd attended the convention.

In addition, Commerce co-sponsored the inaugural BioHealth Capital Region Breakfast held on June 18th, a networking breakfast and panel discussion at Vertex Pharmaceuticals. This event was notable for convening government and industry groups from across Maryland, DC and Virginia. Secretary Coker participated in the panel discussion moderated by Life Sciences Advisory Board Member Mr. Bendis. Commerce also co-sponsored AURP's BioHealth Caucus held June 15-16. Senior Manager Matthew Cimino moderated the panel 'Navigating the New Normal and Life Science Workforce,' during the AURP event.

Reported feedback from the delegation of 15 Maryland companies was strongly positive. Members of the delegation shared that attending with the Maryland Department of Commerce added overall legitimacy to their company, which increased exposure and the number of meeting requests accepted, as well as the number of in-bound meeting requests. Members of the delegation also reported an increase in the number of meaningful outcomes of their meetings, which included productive discussions with investors, and partnerships for in- and out-licensing.

Mr. Bendis shared that this was the best BIO Convention for the Maryland Department of Commerce. He indicated the booth layout and meeting space was ideal for Commerce staff to hold meetings with visitors from around the world, other states, and from Maryland. Mr. Bendis noted that foreign countries had a much larger presence at the convention than in previous years.

Mr. Mortenson noted that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) have large pools of investment capital and are seeking investment opportunities. Mr. Mortenson suggested that Maryland conduct outreach to representatives of these nations. Sec. Coker responded that Commerce is preparing proposals for trade missions that included Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., among other countries and that he was supportive of future engagement with these countries.

Updates on University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing

Dr. Bradley Maron, MD, Co-Director of the University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing (IHC) and Professor of Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, presented to the board the IHC focus areas for innovation impact. The Institute now oversees a workforce of more than 125 professionals, including a wide range of University System of Maryland (USM) faculty and students that bring extensive and broad expertise to the institute. Areas of emerging interest of the IHC include 1. AI-enabled medical imaging, 2. Therapeutic development, 3. Early diagnosis of disease and precision medicine, 4. Improved healthcare efficiency, and 5. Healthcare related software development.

In terms of business and economic development, Dr. Maron shared a four-pronged focus area approach including, 1. Targeted industry collaboration through partnerships with early stage companies, 2. Entrepreneurship and de-risking technologies developed in the USM, 3. Drug development and *in silico* discovery with the USM and clinical testing with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS), and 4. Workforce development through biotech education and continuing medical education.

In closing, Dr. Maron highlighted early stage collaborations that embodied the IHC's business development efforts, including a Maryland Industrial Partnerships submission with startup BioEvanesce, a collaboration with an undisclosed top-10 pharmaceutical company to explore high risk of hypoglycemic episodes, co-hosted networking events with the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, as well as active vetting of USM technologies for potential investment, research, and development.

Chair Perman and Ms. Wyskiel highlighted the broad utility, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, of the Chesapeake Regional Information System for Patients or CRISP as a regional health information exchange (HIE) serving Maryland, noting both the UMMS and Johns Hopkins University Medical System use the Epic electronic medical record system. Ms. Wyskiel encouraged the IHC to navigate existing ethical standards regarding healthcare data privacy and further leverage the CRISP system to support the Institute's research goals with potential use of statewide data.

Review of Research Impacts Related to the 2025 Federal Administration Transition

Michele Masucci, Ph.D, Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, USM, presented the impacts on research activities in Maryland from changes at the Federal level. The data on impacts to Maryland suggested that as of July 11th the state was experiencing more adverse change than any other state.

The impacts included:

1. The use of executive orders to form policy and shape research enterprises
2. Federal grants and program suspensions and terminations
3. Loss of funding to support trainees in all fields
4. Postponement or cancellation of grant review processes and use of grant processes
5. Delay of postings of opportunities for funding and notification of awards

6. Changing terms and conditions of awards, timing of grant implementation, allowable programmatic expenses
7. Reorganization of agencies and workforce reduction of federal agencies
8. Reduction to 15% of allowable fringe and administrative costs on grants from the Departments of Energy and Defense (DOE and DOD), as well as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH)
9. Grants.gov under review by the Department of Government Efficiency
10. Budget framework reduces funding to Science agencies including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), NSF, DOE, NIH, with increases to DOD
11. NIH bans of international collaborative work
12. Moving away from animal model work
13. Return to a gold standard of science

Dr. Masucci suggested considering a number of responses to the listed impacts and changes, including:

1. Work with advocacy organizations like the Association of American Universities (AAU), Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and Council of Government Relations (COGR), which regularly convene research leadership to learn about challenges, share insights, take collective action
2. Follow science advocacy actions of organizations like the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and National Academies of Science
3. Share and disseminate information about these impacts, including with stakeholders
4. Engage in direct communications with federal agencies regarding these impacts
5. Highlight impact of work at institutions, across collaborations, with university-industry partnerships
6. Support research development and advancement through new means
7. Industry partnerships, philanthropy, and collaboration across regions

In response, Mr. Bendis and Dr. Fisher each emphasized the importance of sharing and communicating milestones, achievements, and breakthroughs with Federal sponsors and program managers, as understanding the success and positive impact of the funded research will support their actions in communications with policymakers and elected officials.

Ms. Wyskiel emphasized the importance of and continued need for universities to develop, grow, and maintain partnerships with industry as a possible means to help offset or buffer the challenges stemming from changes at the Federal level.

Public Comments

Mike Gibney representing the publication PharmaVoice raised the issue of the long term effects of these Federal level changes and the potential impacts on the #3 ranking of the BioHealth Capital Region. In response, Sec. Coker stated that Maryland and the BioHealth Capital Region remain the center of federal policy creation and that would drive the region's continued success and competitive ranking. Sec. Coker also indicated the reduction in Federal workforce would be an

opportunity for Maryland businesses to attract valuable workers from the increased pool of available talent.

Sam Hopkins from Mind Over Machines shared gratitude for the opportunity to attend the 2025 BIO Convention using one of Commerce's Exhibit Hall registration passes. Mr. Hopkins shared his beliefs on the resiliency of the Maryland ecosystem and that Maryland continues to have some of the best life sciences talent, as well as laboratory and computational infrastructure and is comparable to any other US regional life sciences cluster.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Perman thanked everyone for attending and participating in the productive discussion. The next LSAB meeting will be held on the 17th Floor of the World Trade Center on November 18th at 10 a.m. Members wishing to submit items for the next meeting's agenda should contact Dr. Trop. Dr. Perman adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.