

Report: To create jobs, streamline tech transfer, entrepreneurship policy

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"The US Secretary of Commerce calls technology commercialization a broken system," says report author Brian Darmody of the University of Maryland. "Our goal is to get it working again, which will help get Americans working again."
Credit: University of Maryland

The federal government can stimulate the creation of jobs and businesses by streamlining its policies for bringing new technologies to market, says a report from the Association of University Research Parks (AURP). The report offers a 10-point plan, including targeted federal investments, and would be especially beneficial for high-tech states like Maryland, according to its author.

"This is not only about money - it's also a matter of adjusting the policies and regulations that too often deter entrepreneurial researchers in our

universities and federal labs from commercializing their work," says report author, Brian Darmody, president of the AURP and University of Maryland associate vice president for research and economic development.

"[Job creation](#) in the United States will largely depend on start-up companies and entrepreneurs who populate university research parks, laboratories and incubators across the nation," Darmody says. "These are the main centers of innovation in this country. Much more of their work would be commercially viable if some of the roadblocks could be eliminated. Other countries simplify [commercialization](#) and lure away U.S. corporate research. We need to provide incentives to keep this work in the United States."

These steps would have special impact in a state like Maryland, which has one of the highest academic research concentrations in the country, as well as the largest concentration of federal laboratories, Darmody explains.

Over 25 years, companies that have benefited from University of Maryland technology programs and incubators have sold near \$20 billion dollars in goods and services in the state, according to a recent study. Research parks account for over 750,000 jobs in North America, Darmody adds. For example, M-Square, the University of Maryland research park and the largest in the state, will employ 6,500 at full capacity.

"But we're not getting the full [economic benefit](#) from federal R&D efforts and other programs," Darmody says. "The U.S. Secretary of Commerce calls technology commercialization a broken system. Our goal is to get it working again, which will help get Americans working again."

10-STEP PLAN

The report, "The Power of Innovation," offers 10 federal steps that can create jobs, technology companies and Communities of Innovation without creating new federal bureaucracies.

These changes include making federal grant policies more flexible for technology commercialization; taking better advantage of the \$25 billion in R&D spent internally in federal labs; and connecting federal researchers with the private sector.

The plan also supports pending federal legislation that would provide seed funding to create or expand research park infrastructure, and calls for "cash for commercialization" - federal grants to encourage researchers to commercialize their work. It also recommends tax policy changes that, for example, would make it easier for the private sector to license universities' intellectual property. The complete report is available online:

"The federal government invests billions of dollars a year in research and development at universities and federal labs, and technology led economic development programs," Darmody says. "All the moving parts in this system need better alignment if we want to get the wheels moving again."

Darmody presented his report today in Washington, D.C. at a National Academies' meeting: Clustering for 21st Century Prosperity, which included participants from the White House National Economic Council, the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, the director of the Small Business Administration. Yesterday the report was presented on Capitol Hill. U.S. House Speaker Steny Hoyer was among those participating.

Provided by University of Maryland

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