

- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- Legislators, University Administrators Gather...

News Story

Legislators, University Administrators Gather to Launch Maryland Energy Innovation Institute

[energy](#)



From left to right: University of Maryland President Wallace Loh; U.S. Senator for Maryland Chris Van Hollen; Maryland State Delegate Tawanna Gaines; Maryland State Senator Richard Madaleno; Darryll Pines, Dean of the A. James Clark School of Engineering and Nariman Farvardin Professor; Eric Wachsman, Director of the Maryland Energy Innovation Institute and Professor of Materials Science and Engineering; and Mary Beth Tung, Director of the Maryland Energy Administration. Photo by Felicity Hancock for the University of Maryland.

College Park, Md. — On August 14, 2017, state and university leaders gathered at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) campus to officially launch the [Maryland Energy Innovation Institute \(MEI²\)](#), created by the state to turn research breakthroughs by Maryland academic institutions into commercial, clean energy solutions that meet the needs of the state and its people.

“[The Maryland Energy Innovation Institute] of course is a great collaboration between the University of Maryland and the Maryland Clean Energy Center, which has been a really important part of the state’s strategy for consistency in our clean energy policies,” said U.S. Senator for Maryland Chris Van Hollen. “More than 100 [University of Maryland] faculty have been involved already in developing breakthrough technologies in the areas of solar, wind, energy efficiency, and battery and fuel cell technology, and [the University] will expand those efforts with the launch of this institute.”

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan authorized \$7.5 million in state funding earlier this year for MEI², an initiative that is designed to catalyze clean energy research programs at academic institutions in the state and attract and develop private investment in clean energy innovation and commercialization. The institute will seek to bolster economic jobs in the clean energy industry sector in Maryland, and also promote the deployment of clean energy technology throughout the state.

MEI² is a partnership between the state’s Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC), directed by Katherine Magruder, and the University of Maryland Energy Research Center (UMERC), directed by Eric Wachsman and situated within UMD’s A. James Clark School of Engineering. Wachsman is also director of MEI².

“Clean energy is an engineering challenge of our day and, more importantly, of the 21st century,” said Darryll Pines, dean of UMD’s A. James Clark School of Engineering and Nariman Farvardin Professor. “Because of the extraordinary commitment of our elected officials who are here today with us, and our partners across the campus and state, we can continue to grow investments in clean energy, innovation, and commercialization for the State of Maryland.”

“When you look at our energy past and our energy future, the first gas lamps in North America turned on in Baltimore almost 200 years ago exactly. The pivot to fossil fuels started here in Maryland—so, isn’t it fitting that the pivot to the next generation of energy also happens in Maryland,” said Maryland State Senator Richard Madaleno. “That’s why I’m so excited, the General Assembly is so excited, to participate in [the Maryland Energy Innovation Institute] so that the clean energy revolution starts here, and we can capture in Maryland not only the environmental benefits, but the economic benefits, as well.”

Additional speakers included University of Maryland President Wallace Loh; Mary Beth Tung, director of the Maryland Energy Administration; and Joshua Greene, chairman of the MCEC board and vice president of A.O. Smith. Also present were Maryland State Delegate Tawanna Gaines, other government officials, and corporate partners, as well as UMD researchers affiliated with the institute who showcased examples of the kind of battery, fuel cell, solar, and energy efficiency technologies that MEI² will work to move into commercial use.

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ABOUT MEI²

The Maryland Energy Innovation Institute (MEI²) is a collaboration between the [Maryland Clean Energy Center \(MCEC\)](#) and the [University of Maryland Energy Research Center \(UMERC\)](#) within the University of Maryland’s [A. James Clark School of Engineering](#). Together, the two entities will provide the critical infrastructure to enable clean energy breakthroughs to become commercially viable companies benefiting both the economy and the environment of the State of Maryland. Visit energy.umd.edu to learn more.