

# VIRGINIA ISRAEL ADVISORY BOARD

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Virginia Israel Advisory Board**

## Annual Report

FISCAL Year 2023

December 15<sup>th</sup> 2023

Mel Chaskin - Chairman

Chuck Lessin - Vice Chairman

Dov Hoch - Executive Director



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## Executive Director's Message

This year's crowning achievement was the appointment of the Virginia Israel Advisory Board (VIAB) as a representative of the US-Israel Binational R&D grant program managed by the BIRD Foundation that funds (up to \$1.5 million) R&D projects between U.S. and Israeli companies. To date: 25 Virginia Israel partnerships received millions of dollars of BIRD funding.



My thanks to the 20 Commonwealth-wide government and private sector organizations that joined the VIAB-BIRD steering group to promote the grants which will jump start Virginia-Israel partnerships and birth Virginia-based ventures.

I am also grateful to all VIAB partners in a variety of this year's undertakings including: conducting a space tech event in Arlington; a smart City event in Israel; a VEDP economic development delegation to Israel and reinstating the Richmond Ballet's Minds and Motion program in Israel, amongst others.

The most meaningful economic development activity this year was ZIM Shipping expanding its long-term presence in Hampton Roads with a \$30 million investment and purchase of new offices in Virginia Beach.

My appreciation to ZIM's management with whom VIAB worked with for the past two years to facilitate the expansion. and thanks, as well, to the economic development stakeholders, particularly the team in Virginia Beach who shepherded the project to fruition.

Looking forward to the upcoming year with continued close ties to public and private state-wide stakeholders.

**Dov Hoch**

*Executive Director*

Virginia Israel Advisory Board



## Chairman's Message

FY 23 has provided the Virginia Israel Advisory Board (VIAB) the ability to get back out and meet new Israeli companies and travel to Israel and accomplish many new positive activities. Israeli companies continued their investments in Virginia over the past year amongst them Zim Shipping, Energix, Starplast, and UVision USA Corporation.



VIAB activities also continued to increase our economic impact, namely more than \$6 billion as cited by The Dragas Center for Economic Policy and Analysis at Old Dominion University that analyzed four Israeli companies with their U.S. headquarters and/or core operations in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This economic impact, measured in increased GDP, represents 30,000 times the VIAB budget. (See Economic Impact Case Studies). Since the Study's completion, these companies continue to contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the Virginia economy.

I look forward to engaging with the new Speaker, delegates, and senators of the General Assembly to further enhance the contribution of VIAB to the Commonwealth.

I am very grateful and proud of our Executive Director, Dov Hoch, for accomplishing these and other significant economic advantages for Virginia.

**Mel Chaskin**

Chairman

Virginia Israel Advisory Board



## VIAB - Who we are and what we do

The Virginia Israel Advisory Board (VIAB) is an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Office of the General Assembly) established in 1996 that develops and enhances cultural, educational, and economic ties between Israel and Virginia.

**In the realm of economic development,** VIAB establishes and grows Israeli companies and partnerships in Virginia and facilitates Virginia companies to source innovative Israeli technologies. Our goal is to increase investment and expand the workforce in Virginia through activities aligned with Commonwealth-wide policies.

### Economic Impact

The Dragas Center for Economic Policy and Analysis at Old Dominion University analyzed four Israeli companies with U.S. headquarters in Virginia and/or their core operations in the Commonwealth. The four companies contributed \$6.5 billion to the GDP of Virginia - an economic impact of 30,000 times VIAB's annual budget. Since the study's completion, these firms continue to contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the Commonwealth's economy.

### Our Approach

**Our management approach** is to leverage lean budgets to develop partnerships in Israel and Virginia that render a multiplier of our resources. **Our operational approach** is to conceptualize and catalyze projects and programs and then engage Israeli institutions to promote them and work with Virginia partners (VEDP; VIPC; Virginia Manufacturers Association; Virginia Tech; regional and local EDAs) to bring them to fruition.

### VIAB Members

The Board is comprised of 31 members, including the Secretaries of Education and Commerce and Trade, who are geographically dispersed throughout the Commonwealth to represent the interests of each region and access resources to advance the undertakings of the VIAB. Board members actively contribute to conceptualizing and executing the VIAB's projects and programs.



**Former CIA Director James Wolsey, MG. Burden head of the Army Future Command and VIAB Executive Director Dov Hoch at VIAB event with Israel Ministry of Defence delegation to Virginia.**



## Executive Summary

### VIAB was appointed to represent the US-Israel Binational R&D Grants

The Israel-U.S. Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation is funded by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Departments of Commerce (Office of Science and Technology Cooperation) and State, Treasury, Homeland Security and Energy, as well as the corresponding Israeli government ministries. The Grants fund (up to \$1.5million) joint Industrial R&D projects between U.S. and Israeli companies in various technological sectors. To date 25 Virginia-Israel partnerships have received BIRD grants.

To promote R&D partnerships and funding in Virginia, VIAB built a Commonwealth-wide steering Group including: the Secretary of Commerce and Trade's office; Virginia Manufacturers Association; Virginia Innovation Partnership Corp. Lighthouse Labs; Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC); Fairfax County; Arlington Economic Development; Alexandria Economic Development Partnership; Hampton Road Business Alliance; Dominion Energy Innovation Center and others.

VIAB works closely with economic development bodies throughout the state including: the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and The Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPIC), as well as regional and local economic development agencies.

VIAB activities are closely aligned with the Administration's Economic Development Policy. There are strong synergies between the segments that VIAB focuses on and has facilitating bringing Israeli companies to Virginia with the Administration's target areas for economic development: Life sciences, aerospace, cybersecurity, controlled environment agriculture and offshore wind.

### Economic Impact

The Dragas Center for Economic Policy and Analysis at Old Dominion University analyzed four Israeli companies with U.S. headquarters in Virginia and/or their core operations in the Commonwealth. The four companies contributed \$6.5 billion to the GDP of Virginia - an economic impact of 30,000 times VIAB's annual budget. Since the study's completion, these firms continue to contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the Commonwealth's economy.

### Space Tech Event with NASA and the Israel Space to advance Virginia-Israel private sector collaborations.

The event, held at the Virginia Tech Executive Briefing Center, cultivated Israeli prospects to build their operations in Virginia and featured speakers from NASA, the Israel Space Agency, startups and established space tech companies, Israel Embassy staff, a Virginia Tech professor, and the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPIC).



### ZIM expands its Virginia operations with \$30m investment

Zim Integrated Shipping Services Ltd., commonly known as ZIM, is a publicly held Israeli international cargo shipping company, and one of the top 20 global carriers. ZIM expanded its Virginia operations with \$30m investment, moving its U.S. Headquarters from Norfolk where the company had its U.S. headquarters since 2001 to Virginia Beach. There, the company purchased a [\\$12m building in Virginia Beach Town Center](#). Currently ZIM employs about 300 in Norfolk and has contributed more than \$1 billion to the Virginia economy.

### Richmond Ballet Minds in Motion – Student programs in Israel

The program is a two-week residency in Israel that applies dance as a means of cross-cultural exchange between Jewish Israeli schools and Arab-Muslim Israeli schools. The in-person program, conducted since 2009, was reinstated this year after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Thomas Jefferson “Commerce with All Nations Awards”

The Virginia Israel Advisory Board acknowledges people and organizations who partner with VIAB in an ongoing and meaningful manner. This year’s recipients included a broad range of Commonwealth-wide institutions: Wyatt Toehlke Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Trade; Rob Davenport Director of Marketing and Development Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS); Conaway Haskins VP Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Virginia Innovation Partnership Corp.; Art Espey Managing Director Lighthouse Labs; Dr. Hal Irvin Associate V.P. Health Sciences and Technology Outreach Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC); Nissim Yochai President ZIM (US).

## Factors Impacting our Operations and Activities

### **Economic Development professionals, leaving and churn throughout the Commonwealth**

A significant impact on our operations has been changes in economic development staff in every one of the organizations VIAB works with. Although new staffers are eager to cultivate relationships with VIAB, it is very time-consuming.

### **The competitive environment**

VIAB’s work in Israel has become increasingly competitive to attract direct foreign investment. Forty US states; regions and counties have staff in Israel – including Maryland with whom we closely compete for tech prospects in the DMV and most recently Washington D.C. now retains an economic development rep. in Israel.

The Annual Report was reviewed by the Board of the VIAB.





## VIAB representing US-Israel R&D Grants - BIRD Foundation



The Virginia Israel Advisory Board was appointed a representative of the US-Israel Binational R&D grant managed through the BIRD Foundation that funds joint Industrial R&D projects between US and Israeli companies in various technological sectors. The BIRD Foundation is funded by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, US Departments of Commerce (Office of Science and Technology Cooperation) State; Treasury; Homeland Security and Energy, as well as the corresponding Israeli government ministries.

BIRD provides conditional grants of up to \$1.5m for collaborative product development. Funding cannot exceed 50% of a project's budget starting with R&D through initial sales. The Foundation does not acquire equity or intellectual property rights from participating companies. Rather, funding is repaid through royalties if the companies are commercially successful. If the ventures fail, there is no claw back mechanism. The Israel Virginia partnerships establish their commercial ventures in the Commonwealth thus contributing to the tech sector and GDP.

**Twenty five Virginia-Israel partnerships received BIRD grants totaling many millions of dollars.**

<p><b>Commercial R&amp;D Grants</b></p> <p><a href="#">MORE INFO</a></p>	<p><b>Homeland Security R&amp;D Grants</b></p> <p><a href="#">MORE INFO</a></p>	<p><b>Cyber Security R&amp;D Grants</b></p> <p><a href="#">MORE INFO</a></p>	<p><b>Energy R&amp;D Grants</b></p> <p><a href="#">MORE INFO</a></p>
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### The Commonwealth-wide BIRD Foundation - Virginia Steering Group

To promote R&D partnerships and funding in Virginia, VIAB built a Commonwealth-wide steering Group including: the Secretary of Commerce and Trade's office; Virginia Manufacturers Association; Virginia Innovation Partnership Corp. Lighthouse Labs; Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC); Fairfax County; Arlington Economic Development; Alexandria Economic Development Partnership; Hampton Road Business Alliance; Dominion Energy Innovation Center and others.

◀ **Don Richardson, CEO at Cassiopeia Space Systems Inc. (CSS), a Wakefield, VA company and joint venture between Va. based MIL-SAT and Israel's Over-SAT, that developed the RIGEL Satcom Terminal. BIRD provided \$1m matching funds for the R&D phase of the venture.**







### Richmond Ballet – Student Programs in Israel

Minds In Motion, a program of the Richmond Ballet, has run a two-week residency in Israel since 2009. The program applies dance as a means of cross-cultural exchange between Jewish Israeli schools and Arab Muslim Israeli schools. The in-person program was re-instituted this year after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Each partnered school provides a two-week residency, with 45 minutes of professional dance training daily during school hours. After one week of separate classes, students use their new skills to meet and engage with the students from the partnered school. Following combined rehearsals, students perform in shared final performances in both communities.

Building on values of teamwork, interdependence, and empathy, the program develops and enhances relationships across multiple levels: student to student, school to school, and community to community. Minds In Motion Israel promotes positive connections by using the shared language of movement as a platform for students to meet, learn, and create together.

The Israel Residency Program is generously supported by the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater with additional funding from the Jewish Federation of Richmond. Both bodies are represented on the Virginia Israel Advisory Board.





## Space Tech Event

VIAB convened 16 speakers from NASA: the Israel Space Agency, startups and established space tech companies, Israel Embassy staff, a Virginia Tech professor, and the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPIC) at the **Virginia Tech Executive Briefing Center**. The event was sponsored by the Arlington Economic Development Agency and Williams Mullen’s Space Law Practice.

**Outcomes:** The event was the “**First Step**” of VIAB building a mindset in Israel that National Landing, situated in Northern Virginia where Virginia Tech’s Innovation Campus and Amazon’s Innovation Center are located, is an attractive tech ecosystem to establish U.S. operations by Israeli companies.

VIAB has built a pipeline of 50 Israeli companies to bring to Virginia or develop Virginia Israel partnerships based in the Commonwealth. VIAB is also replicating this model for other segments (e.g. unmanned systems, smart mobility, smart city).



▲ **VIAB Space Tech Event** with NASA and the Israel Space Agency to advance Virginia / Israel private sector collaborations.

**“We were thrilled to partner with VIAB to host the US-Israel Space Tech Event in Arlington.”**

[READ MORE](#)

Marian Marquez, Acting Deputy Director of Arlington Economic Development.

**“Earlier this year, I met with Israeli tech companies in Tel Aviv that are driving space innovation with important commercial and defense applications, and we have many great companies here in Northern Virginia doing the same. Space Tech brought them together.”**



## Israeli companies entering and expanding in the Commonwealth

**ZIM Integrated Shipping Services Ltd. ZIM expands its Virginia operations with a \$30 million investment.** ZIM American Integrated Shipping Services Co.'s expansion involves moving its U.S. Headquarters to Virginia Beach from Norfolk where the company has had its U.S. headquarters since 2001.

The company purchased a [\\$12m building Virginia Beach Town Center](#). Currently ZIM employs about 300 individuals in Norfolk and has contributed more than \$1 billion to the Virginia economy. The details of the deal were covered in a [Virginia Business Magazine article](#).

VIAB, along with its Tidewater area board members, worked with ZIM on the expansion for the past two years, initially with the City of Norfolk and the Norfolk Economic Development team.



**Zim announces \$30M expansion**  
Shipping company to move from Norfolk to Va. Beach



◀ **City of Virginia Beach Mayor Bobby Dyer and ZIM U.S. CEO Nissim Yochai.**

### Economic Impact Analyzes of the Virginia Israel Advisory Board



#### Company Case Study: ZIM Integrated Shipping Services Ltd.



**\$900 Million**

Contribution to the Virginia Economy

**4000 X**

VIAB's 2019 Budget

**200 X**

VIAB's Budget Since Inception

**2001-2008**

Contribution not accounted for in Report

#### 10 Year Economic Impact of ZIM Shipping on the Commonwealth of Virginia (2009 - 2019)

ZIM's Economic Impact in Virginia exceeds \$1B

MORE INFO

Governor's Announcement

MORE INFO

Virginia Business Magazine Article

MORE INFO





## Israeli Companies Building Operations in Virginia

VIAB continues to support Israeli companies that began building operations in the Commonwealth last year:



**Starplast** invested \$17.7 million that will create 300 jobs at its new manufacturing plant and distribution center in Chesterfield County.

◀ **Starplast's CEO Danny Schwartz and Virginia Israel Advisory board Executive Director Dov Hoch at the company's 228,000 Sq. Ft. manufacturing plant and distribution center in Chesterfield County.**



**UVision USA Corporation**, a developer of unmanned military systems, is investing \$2.2 million to establish a U.S. fabrication and training center at the Quantico Corporate Center next to the U.S.

Marines HQ in Stafford County. VIAB Deputy Chairman Chuck Lessin spoke at the opening of the facility which Board member Jeff Bialos also attended. The move follows, VIAB hosting an Israel Ministry of Defense unmanned systems delegation to Virginia (four days, six cities).



**Pure Salmon is investing \$228 million in a captive growth fish farm that will employ 200 in Tazewell/Russell counties.**

VIAB conceptualized the venture in 2012 and brought Joe Marcy, Virginia Tech's head of the Department of Food Science and Technology, to Israel to assess prospective technologies for aquacultural projects in Southwest Virginia. VIAB consequently worked with Virginia Tech Associate Professor David Kuhn to bring Aquamaof, the Israeli company whose RAS technology is the backbone of the venture, to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg for a year to launch the venture. This controlled environment agriculture venture is aligned with one of the Administration's core economic development segments.



Read the Cardinal news article [here](#).



## Economic Impact - Case Studies

ECONOMIC IMPACT CASE STUDY

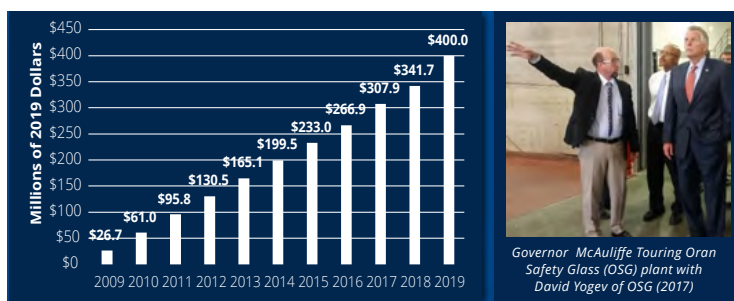
The Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy at Old Dominion University analyzed four Israeli companies with U.S. headquarters in Virginia and/or their core operations in the Commonwealth.

These four companies contributed \$6.5 billion to the GDP of Virginia - an economic impact of more than 30,000 times VIAB's annual budget.

Since the study's completion, these firms continue to contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the Commonwealth's economy, notably: ZIM Shipping in 2023 committed to invest an additional \$30m in its US Headquarters in Virginia and to expand their team. Energix has invested additional \$100s of millions to build and operate solar energy farms throughout Virginia and has its US Headquarters in Arlington.

Company	Economic Impact	Multiple of VIAB Budget	Years Analyzed / Years in Virginia	Description
ZIM	\$918 Million	4000	11 yrs / 22yrs in Virginia	Accounts for 50% activity in Virginia. Investing \$30m 2023-2024
Oran Safety Glass	\$400 Million	2000	11 yrs / 20yrs in Virginia	Manufacturing and U.S. Sales Office in Virginia.
Energix	\$35 Million	150	2 yrs / 5 yrs in Virginia	Aligned with Va. renewable energy policy; U.S. HQ in Virginia.
Sabra Dipping	\$5.2 Billion	26,000	Analyzed 2010 - 2020	Significant on-going contribution
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6.553 Billion</b>	<b>32,150</b>	<b>Contribution to Virginia's GDP (only 4 Israeli companies)</b>	

### Cumulative Economic Impact of Oran Safety Glass Operations in the Commonwealth of Virginia



Governor McAuliffe Touring Oran Safety Glass (OSG) plant with David Yogeve of OSG (2017)

### Company Case Study: Oran Safety Glass

Oran Safety Glass (OSG) is a company based in Emporia, Virginia that manufactures safety glass. It is estimated that the company had an economic impact of around \$400 million in Virginia from 2009 to 2019. The company also had a positive impact on employment in Virginia, with the number of jobs it created climbing from 107 in 2009 to 239 in 2019.



## Collaborations and Activities with Commonwealth Partners

VIAB works closely with economic development bodies throughout the state including: the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and The Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPIC), as well as regional and local economic development agencies.

There are strong synergies between the segments VIAB focuses on and the Administration’s targets for economic development: Life sciences, aerospace, cybersecurity, controlled environment agriculture and offshore wind. VIAB facilitates bringing Israeli companies to Virginia in each of these verticals.



### Youngkin Administration’s Economic Development Policy

[Chart of VIAB activities supporting the five target segments in Virginia’s economic development policy.](#)

VIAB is also contributing to a core goal of Virginia’s Economic Development Plan: “To expand Virginia’s entrepreneurial ecosystem to spur startup and new business formation”. Our activities in facilitating [BIRD](#) are helping to create partnerships between Israel and Virginia startups and to develop a startup incubator in Virginia specially targeting early-stage companies.

**VEDP Delegation to Israel:** The Virginia Economic Development Partnership conducted meetings with 15 Israeli prospects during a weeklong trip to Israel. The delegation was led by VEDP’s Vince Barnett, Vice President of Business Investment.

**SelectUSA** – SelectUSA is the Department of Commerce’s annual event to attract foreign direct investment to the USA. It is attended by 100 countries, last year Israel had the third largest delegation.

During the weeklong event and ongoing follow up, VIAB worked closely with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership’s team to engage 40 Israeli prospects as well as attending an event at the Israeli Embassy with Secretary Caren Merrick.

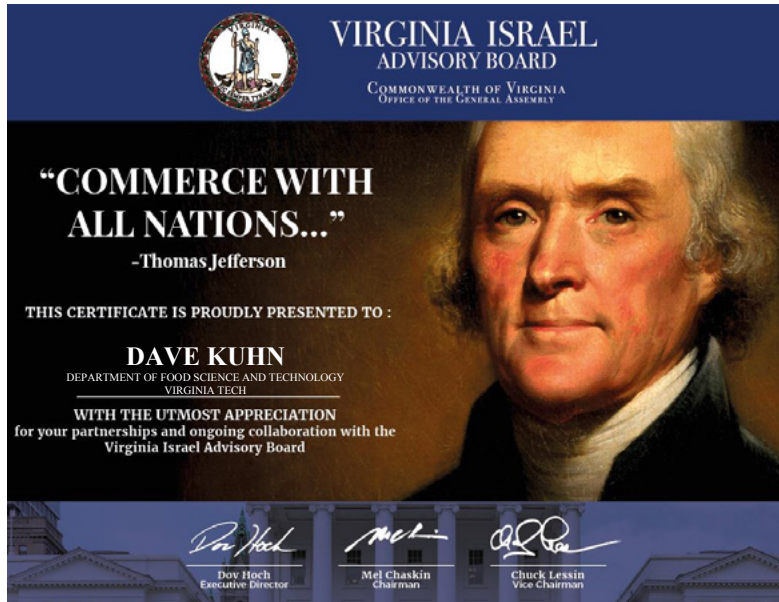


▲  
**Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick at the Israeli embassy SelectUSA event with the Israeli Economic Attaché.**





## Thomas Jefferson Commerce with All Nations Awards

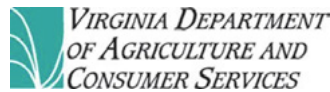


*The Virginia Israel Advisory Board acknowledges people and organizations who partner with VIAB in an on-going and meaningful manner. The award ceremonially cites Thomas Jefferson's "Commerce with all Nations".*

This year's recipients included a broad range of Commonwealth-wide institutions:



**Wyatt Toehlke Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Trade** – for his ongoing facilitation with undertakings associated with the Department of Commerce and Trade.



**Rob Davenport Director of Marketing and Development Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** – for his being VIAB's primary Point-of Contact with VDACS and the state's agricultural ecosystem.



**Conaway Haskins VP Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Virginia Innovation Partnership Corp.** – for his joining the VIAB BIRD Grants Steering Group and accessing the Virginia innovation ecosystem.



**Lighthouse Labs**

**Art Espey Managing Director Lighthouse Labs** – for his joining the VIAB BIRD Grants Steering Group and facilitating VIAB within the Virginia start-up community.



**Dr. Hal Irvin Associate V.P. Health Sciences and Technology Outreach Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC)** – for his promotion of VIAB in the Bio-Tech segment and the Roanoke Economic Develop community.



**Nissim Yochai ZIM US President** – who led ZIM's relocation to Virginia Beach and \$30M expansion. Also ZIM's Global CFO Ilana Rosenberg who worked with VIAB for two years on the company's expansion.



## Strategy and Approach

VIAB leverages strong synergies between Israel and Virginia, connecting Virginia and Israeli institutions and private sector ecosystems to build lasting partnerships.

### In Israel:

We develop institutional awareness and mindsets that promote Virginia to companies interested in building U.S. operations.

### In Virginia:

We promote the value of Israeli innovation to Virginia concerns and VIAB as a strong partner to bring projects to fruition.



**Direct Foreign Investment** - VIAB balances a projects and partnerships approach. VIAB works in connection with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) on prospects that have site specific requirements and are interested in state incentives as many Israeli companies do not apply for state funding. Separately, VIAB develops R&D and commercial partnerships that birth new companies in Virginia.



**Management Approach** - lean budgets and staff that leverage partners in Israel and Virginia to render a multiplier of our resources.



**Operational Approach** - VIAB conceptualizes and catalyzes projects and programs, such as Pure Salmon and BIRD Grants, then engages Israeli institutions to promote them to prospects, e.g. Israel Ministry of Defense delegation to Virginia, and works with Virginia partners to bring them to fruition (VEDP, VIPC, Virginia Manufacturers Association, Virginia Tech, regional and local EDAs).

Board members actively contribute to conceptualizing and executing the VIAB's projects and programs.

## VIAB Activities are Aligned with Virginia's 2023 Economic Development Plan

Target Segment	Israeli Company	Description
Aerospace	Israel Aerospace Industries	Israel's largest Defense contractor U.S. HQ in Herndon Virginia
Cybersecurity	10 companies in Virginia	Cellebrite; Verint; Cyberason
Controlled Environment Agriculture	<u>Pure Salmon</u>	Building indoor Fish Farm in Tazewell / Russell counties. \$228m investment will employ 200 workers
Life Sciences	<u>Cupron</u>	Received Virginia Governor's Award for Science Innovation. BioTechnology Research Park (Richmond) Licensed IP to EOS Surfaces (Norfolk)
Offshore Wind	Energix	\$100s Million investment in Solar farms in Virginia



## Focus Areas and Activities for Next Year

- Marketing Virginia in Israel and facilitating new prospects with our Commonwealth-wide partners in sectors aligned with the Administration's Economic Development Policy: Aerospace, Cybersecurity, Controlled Environment Agriculture and Life Sciences.
- Explore building business accelerators in Virginia backed by Israeli companies that will coach early-stage companies from ideation to product development.
- Promote funding of partnerships between Virginia and Israeli companies with \$1.5 million BIRD grants.
- Deepen and broaden working relationships with the General Assembly's new delegates and senators.
- Expand faith-based business ties and bring a Virginia Christian business delegation to Israel.

