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Maryland State Library Agency - Capital

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Response to the Analyst's Review

**Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee
February 23, 2021**

**House Capital Budget Subcommittee
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The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) welcomes this opportunity to share with the Committees some of its success stories and to address information in the analysis.

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) wishes to express its appreciation to the General Assembly for the legislation enacted in fiscal 2008 to establish the Public Library Capital Grant Program and for implementing the wealth-based cost sharing formula in fiscal 2014. The increase in the State share for counties with less wealth, such as Allegany and Somerset, has enabled 23 of Maryland's 24 public library systems to participate in the program.

Fiscal 2022 is the fifteenth year that State assistance will be available to public libraries in Maryland. Program priorities include geographic diversity in grant distribution and stimulating local support for library facilities development. Since the inception of the program, \$67,325,000 has been authorized, leveraging more than \$360,000,000 in local matching funds, or nearly six times the amount of the State's investment.

While the majority of the grant awards have funded basic, but critical renovations including roof, window and HVAC replacement, 18 new public libraries have been opened with State support, and four more are currently underway.

Although the two new libraries completed in 2020 have had to limit some of their services due to the pandemic, you can visit them virtually. Photographs of the Michael E. Busch Library in Annapolis (Anne Arundel) are located at <https://www.aacpl.net/new-annapolis> and a video tribute is also available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lt7XEHOuA_8. There is an accessible photo tour as well as a 360 degree tour of the new mixed use public library and senior center facility in Leonardtown (St. Mary's) at <https://www.stmalib.org/about-us/locations-and-hours/leonardtown-building-tour/> and at <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=z7Fc3GCTsFz>.

We are excited to report that the new Northeast Library (Cecil) is nearly complete and scheduled to be dedicated for service in a ceremony on April 23, 2021. With three additional new construction projects recommended for funds in fiscal 2022 in Riviera Beach (Anne Arundel), Twin Beaches (Calvert) and Middletown (Frederick), this will bring the total to 22 new public libraries made possible by this grant program.

As you recognized during last year's Session, this level of progress was not sustainable if funding remained flat while construction costs continued to escalate. Total requests usually exceeded the \$5 million dollars previously mandated for the program. During the fiscal 2022 application cycle, requests totaled \$8,587,000; in fiscal 2021, requests totaled \$7,650,000; in fiscal 2020 requests totaled \$11,202,000; and in fiscal 2019 requests totaled \$10,114,000. The bottom line is that \$5,000,000 is not a whole library, or even 50% of one new library in most locations, and the program was no longer able to meet the urgent and necessary needs of 24 library systems with 191 facilities at the former mandated amount.

According to the most recent statewide facilities assessment conducted by MSLA in November 2020, more than half of the public library buildings in Maryland are over twenty five (25) years old. Consequences of this aging infrastructure are: 17 buildings need a new roof, 10 facilities require alterations for ADA compliance, 17 libraries have HVAC systems that are at the end of their useful life, 43 buildings require technological upgrades in order to provide 21st century library services, 55 existing facilities require general renovation at an estimated cost of \$77,000,000, and 8 buildings have been identified for replacement with a new structure at an estimated cost of \$65,000,000.

In addition to the mandated \$5,000,000 included in the Governor's Capital Budget for fiscal 2022, **MSLA requests your approval of supplemental funds totaling \$323,000** for the LaVale Library expansion and renovation. MSLA was notified of a shortfall in total project funds following the award of the general construction contract, but after the proposed budget was forwarded to the Governor by the Department of Budget and Management's Capital Budgeting Office. This amount is a fraction of the \$2,500,000 increase authorized in the **Building Lifelong Library Learners Act of 2020** (HB 1000/SB 524). While the General Assembly passed this bill during the 2020 Session, it was vetoed by the Governor. A veto override of the bill has just been approved by the General Assembly during the 2021 Session. Without this modest supplemental funding increase, completion of the project will be delayed nearly three months, from May 2022 until August 2022, while waiting for additional State funds to become available for furnishings after the new fiscal year 2023 begins on July 1, 2022.

In conclusion, we wish to thank members of the General Assembly for supporting public libraries and recognizing the need to increase the annual funding mandate for the County Library Capital Grant program from \$5,000,000 to \$7,500,000 on a permanent basis beginning in fiscal 2023 through the **Building Lifelong Library Learners Act of 2020**.