



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

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SENATE BILL 848 Enoch Pratt Free Library—Capital Project Funding

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: February 21, 2024

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

SUMMARY OF BILL: Senate Bill 848 (SB 848) repeals and reenacts with amendments a mandate established under Section 23-402(a) of the Education Article, which concerns funding for the Enoch Pratt Free Library System in Baltimore City. Under the current statute, additional operating support in the amount of \$3 million has been mandated beginning with fiscal year 2023 and continuing each fiscal year thereafter to fund expenses associated with increased hours of operation across the System. Baltimore City is presently required to provide a 25% match for each dollar of State funds for this purpose, which SB 848 proposes to repeal. Additionally, SB 848 would require \$10 million in State appropriation in the annual budget bill in fiscal 2025 and fiscal 2026 to fund improvements to aging infrastructure and capital projects that exceed \$1 million. Eligible initiatives may include alterations to achieve ADA compliance, repair or replacement of roofs or HVAC systems, or replacement of obsolete or unsafe buildings. Receipt of State funds under the proposed amendment would require a 10% match from the Enoch Pratt Free Library Board of Trustees.

EXPLANATION: The fiscal 2025 – 2029 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes \$7.5 million in GO bonds annually for the Maryland State Library Agency under the Public Library Capital Grant Program. This program provides grants to public libraries to acquire land and to design, construct, expand, renovate, and equip public library facilities across the State; inclusive of all those operated under the Enoch Pratt Free Library System. Funding for the program is mandated under Section 23-509 of the Education Article, and each year specific projects are selected by a committee of library directors and trustees, and subsequently approved by the State Library Board. With regards to the proposed legislation, it is the intent of the General Assembly to enhance funding for the Enoch Pratt Free Library System specifically to advance the role of its branches as vital places of community development, arenas for innovation, and resources for the State’s workforce system. SB 848 also affirms the System’s role in supporting equitable economic recovery by providing its patrons with opportunities to access new technology, gain digital skills, and pursue vocational and educational programs.

The \$10 million funding mandate set forth by SB 848 in fiscal 2025 and fiscal 2026 is intended to be supplemental to, and may not supplant, funds appropriated to the Enoch Pratt Free Library System from any other sources. There is one project within the Enoch Pratt Free Library System planned in fiscal 2025

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under the Public Library Capital Grant Program, Forest Park Library Renovation and Expansion, at a cost of \$2.2 million. Implementing this new mandate would result in a cost of \$20 million from fiscal 2025 to fiscal 2026, which would necessitate a reduction in other critical programs and projects already planned in the CIP. The \$10 million mandate would not be applicable to the fiscal 2025 capital budget.

Additionally, the repeal of the 25% local match requirement associated with the State's \$3 million operating mandate to support extended hours at Enoch Pratt Free Library branches may reduce local operating support to the System by up to \$750,000 if Baltimore City decides not to contribute.

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