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The Maryland House of Delegates

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony House Bill 898 Operating Budget – Unanticipated Federal Funds – Authorized Uses

By Delegate Maggie McIntosh

Vice Chair Chang and members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am pleased today to present House Bill 898 titled Operating Budget – Unanticipated Federal Funds – Authorized Uses.

This emergency bill is crucial because, in anticipation of federal aid, this bill will prohibit the expenditure of specified, unanticipated federal funds by a budget amendment in the fiscal years 2021 and 2022. The bill's prohibition applies to federal funds that are appropriated by Congress on or after December 14, 2020, or part of a grant that is not included in the fiscal 2022 budget books.

The prohibition in this bill will not apply to funding for COVID-19 vaccine acquisition, distribution, and administration or for transit operating costs, funds that increase an appropriation in the fiscal 2022 budget that provides funding for programs authorized in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, or to support eviction assistance, and financial support for unemployed individuals.

"The legislation's prohibition does not apply to a budget amendment that the Board of Public Works (BPW) determines is essential to maintaining public safety, health, or welfare of the State or protecting the environment or economic welfare of the State."

This the purpose and force behind the bill, however, it is just as important to answer. The obvious answer is that we need to maximize our response to the pandemic by focusing resources. The other impact if this legislation passes is than unlike current practice, we and the policy committees will have a seat at the table on decisions and direction of federal funding coming to Maryland.

In recent weeks I have described Appropriations Committee task this year to pass a budget drawing on three "buckets" of funding. First, the Federal COVID relief funds that do not yet appear in the Governors FY22 Budget, second, the FY22 Budget, and third the anticipated and more than \$1B in the March Federal COVID relief act. Our task will be to fold all three sources of funding to achieve the greatest impact on relief and recovery for all Marylanders.

To state the obvious, while we are in session we do have influence over policy and direction of these funds, however 90 days ends quickly and so does our ability to have a meaningful dialog. We will return to the experience faced by many on this committee and our leadership during 2020. One example, our own Education and Economic Matters Subcommittee spend hours and hours trying to facilitate the voices and needs of Maryland Child Care providers. When Federal funds finally arrived, a budget amendment ignored all the input of their hard work. The current practices are just to submit an amendment and after 45 days it is implemented. On page 2 of the fiscal analysis is a concise description of current practice.

HB898 does not want to interfere or impede the clear relief need in the categories of spending that are not part of the prohibition within this legislation, rather it is intended to insure a focus so that all Federal funds are utilized for recovery and relief due to COVID.

I want to conclude by saying that I believe this bill will expand collaboration between the legislative branch and our Governor's office to meet Maryland needs. In fact, a model for this is underway with the formation of a legislative group to work with Secretary Holt of DHCD to allocate and target the \$400M in Federal funds for eviction prevention due to the pandemic. Our own, Delegate Jazz Lewis, will be representing this committee. The result of this work will be a budget amendment or set of amendments that have examined statewide needs and solutions to prevent eviction.

I encourage your favorable report on this emergency bill HB898.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maggie McIntosh', written in a cursive style.

Chairwoman Maggie McIntosh
District 43, Baltimore City