



Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

SB 501 - Libraries -

Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established

February 27, 2023

Support

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) supports **SB 501 Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established**. This legislation will establish and fund an essential program to ensure Maryland's public libraries can remedy long-standing aging infrastructure challenges, which negatively affect Marylanders' access to library resources, services, and programs.

PGCMLS has benefitted from state capital grants in the past, most significantly with the award of \$2,068,000 for building a new Baden Branch Library, which is the sole branch library serving the rural, southeastern region of Prince George's County. At present, more than half of Maryland's 191 public library buildings are over 25 years old. Many of the library buildings that are in greatest need of capital improvement are situated in neighborhoods that face the greatest socio-economic challenges and systemic inequities. PGCMLS' existing 19 public neighborhood branch libraries have significant HVAC and flooding issues that can only be addressed with additional capital improvement grant funding.

SB 501 is particularly important legislation for addressing aging infrastructure capital improvements, as the bill directly addresses the relationship between maintaining viable facilities and providing access to programs and services, including digital skills acquisition, access for new technologies, and vocational and educational programs. The matching funds requirement ensures that participating public libraries have local buy-in, in the form of local capital improvement funding and/or other community philanthropic support. The legislation will also support alterations to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, repair or replacement of roof and HVAC systems, and technological upgrades to provide 21st century library services, general renovation of existing facilities, and replacement of obsolete or unsafe buildings with new structures.

We invite you to learn more about the Prince George's County Memorial Library Systems Capital Improvement Program on the [PGCMLS Builds website](#). PGCMLS prioritizes providing accessible, transparent information about capital projects, which helps community members and library staff share responsibility for project progress.

Maryland's public libraries continue to fill critical community needs, including services for job seekers, small business owners, students, and residents of all ages. We respectfully ask that you support **SB 501 - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established** to ensure that Maryland's public libraries can continue to provide Marylanders with the foundational tools to thrive as individuals and leave no one behind.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Gannon
Acting Co-CEO
COO for Support Services



Nicholas A. Brown
Acting Co-CEO
COO for Communication and Outreach