

Letterhead Template-Dec22.pdf

Uploaded by: Barry Glassman

Position: FAV



**Harford County
Public Library**

1221-A Brass Mill Road • Belcamp, Maryland 21017
410.273.5600 • Balto.Metro 410.575.6761
TDD: 410.838.3371 • FAX: 410.273.5606

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Finance Committee
3 E Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 501 – Libraries – Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program – Established - SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair and members of the Finance Committee,

The Harford County Library system strongly supports SB 501. Our system shares an aging infrastructure with many systems across Maryland as we strive to serve our customers with upgraded technology and community gathering areas which are warm and inviting.

Senate Bill 501 provides a beginning 40-million-dollar annual appropriation and requires a 20% match from any combination of county, municipal or private source such as our own fundraising in the community.

Establishment of this capital program will begin to address the backlog of repairs, renovations including technical upgrades and roof replacement projects. Harford County Library system alone has 7 facilities between 11 and 25 years of age and 4 that fall between 26 and 50 years old. The bill has a clear and balance application process for review of submitted capital projects.

Harford County Library appreciates your support of our libraries across Maryland, and we would respectfully request a FAVORABLE report for Senate Bill 501.

Sincerely,

Mary Hastler, CEO

Capital Improvement Aging Libraries support SB0501

Uploaded by: Dana Newman

Position: FAV



Dana Newman
Director

100 West Dover Street
Easton, MD 21601

Telephone
410-822-1626
Fax
410-820-8217

Senate Capital Budget and Taxation Committee
Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established
February 28, 2023, Support SB0501

Senator Guy J. Guzzone, Chair
Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair
Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building

Dear Senator Guzzone, Senator Rosapepe, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

The Talbot County Free Library fully supports SB0501, Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program. The funding in this bill is critical to library building and renovation projects across the state which will support long-term improvements to library facilities. Funding provided by this act would help libraries to better serve underserved and distressed communities, low-income and rural areas, people with disabilities, and vulnerable library users including children and seniors. As our country continues to grapple with economic impacts for families including inflation and a possible recession, we must look forward and begin to craft solutions to support everyone in our community. During times of economic hardship, library services are unique and essential to the economic recovery of our community and in particular to individuals who rely on job search assistance, career skill building services and resources, small business resources and much more that public libraries provide. As trusted centers of community life and essential infrastructure, libraries are a perfect place to start.

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) has established procedures to receive requests and distribute State capital funding through the annual County Library Capital Grant Program. Since the inception of the grant program in FY 2008, the number of annual awards has varied from 20 to 4 projects. More than half of the 191 public library buildings in Maryland are over twenty five (25) years old. Consequences of this aging infrastructure are: 5 buildings need a new roof, 3 facilities require alterations for ADA compliance, 4 libraries have HVAC systems that are at the end of their useful life, 26 buildings require technological upgrades in order to provide 21st century library services, 23 existing facilities require general renovation, and 6 buildings have been identified for replacement with a new structure. The total estimated cost of these projects is **\$424.38 million**. With the escalation of construction costs, grant requests have become larger, thereby decreasing the number of projects/geographic diversity in the distribution of awards. Most libraries do not request or receive the entire amount of State funds for which they are eligible. While the allocation of an additional \$40 million annually is more than 5 times the total allocation of \$7.5 million annually for the existing statewide program, it will not significantly increase the total number of projects being managed by the agency or require additional staff. Since requests are capped at 2 per system under the proposed legislation, the maximum number of requests could not exceed 48 projects. Small, rural library systems like TCFL are not able to match more than one project in a single fiscal year. The agency anticipates fewer, but larger, requests

under this proposed legislation since the minimum request is \$500,000. The minimum request is \$20,000 under the current grant program

In order for small, rural library buildings to remain vibrant, sustainable, and highly responsive to our communities who rely on them, we need the additional funding that SB0501 would provide. As the director of a public library system that has been awarded \$1,360,000 in design and construction funds through the Maryland Library Capital Grant Program for two library expansion projects, I can attest to the success of capital grant funding for libraries over the past 17 years. This program has helped the Talbot County Free Library system leverage over a million dollars in local funding to expand and renovate the Easton Library in 2011 and to help fund design for the expansion and renovation of the St. Michaels Library in 2023.

The additional funding included in this bill is needed for the construction of the renovation and expansion of the St. Michaels Library which is a busy public hub that plays a key role in our community, providing diverse library materials, programs for patrons of all ages, and computers and Wi-Fi access that assists with job seeking and other information needs. The existing facility, at 7500 SF, is inadequate in size to provide for the needs of our thriving community and has inadequate spaces for children and teens. Our citizens would benefit tremendously from an expanded library that has infrastructure that supports the technological needs of our residents and visitors, rectifies accessibility issues in the building, has larger meeting rooms, expands the children's and teen areas, adds additional computers, improves digital infrastructure, and provides for additional collection space, all of which will allow the library to better respond to customer demands today and in the future. Funding from the state is essential for the project to move forward so that the library may continue to serve the diverse needs of the community.

Investing in libraries is investing in employment, literacy, health, and the overall economy of all counties and jurisdictions in Maryland. I respectfully request that you fully support the additional funding included in SB0501. Thank you very much for your continued support of Maryland libraries.

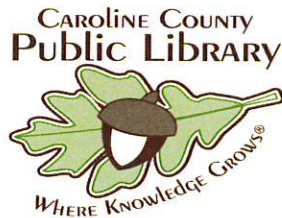
Sincerely,

Dana Newman
Director

SB501 Libraries-Aging Infrastructure Capital Impro

Uploaded by: Debby Bennett

Position: FAV



Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB501 Libraries – Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established
February 27, 2023
Support

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

This letter is in support of SB501 for the purpose of establishing the Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program to address the aging infrastructure capital needs identified in the 2022 Statewide Facilities Needs Assessment, to be administered by the Maryland State Library Agency.

During the 2021 session, the General Assembly increased the annual state funding mandate for the library grant program from \$5 million to \$7.5 million. But even at this level, it will take 20 years to meet the immediate needs of Maryland's libraries.

More than half of the 191 public library buildings in Maryland are over twenty five (25) years old. Our Central Library in Denton is 52 years old and is currently benefiting from Maryland State Capital grant funds to bring it up to current Building Code and ADA compliance, and to be able to provide 21st central library services. We are having to conduct this work over two years to handle the local match. Our Federalsburg Branch is 92 years old, a former Federalsburg Women's Club building well past the end of its useful life as a library. It does not meet current code or ADA compliance. There are many services we cannot provide to the residents in the southern part of our county served by this Branch due to lack of space. Meeting the local match for capital grant projects is a challenge for Caroline County Public Library.

This funding would help Maryland public libraries renovate or replace our aging facilities, which in turn would help us provide the 21st century services our citizens expect from their public libraries. It would allow the Caroline County Public Library to consider the possibility of building a new branch in Federalsburg,

I respectfully ask for your support of SB501.

Sincerely,

Debby Bennett
Executive Director

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

Central Library
100 Market Street
Denton, Maryland 21629
p 410.479.1343 f 410.479.1443

Federalsburg Branch
123 Morris Avenue
Federalsburg, Maryland 21632
p 410.754.8397 f 410.754.3058

North County Branch
101 Cedar Lane • P.O. Box 336
Greensboro, Maryland 21639
p 410.482.2173 f 410.482.2634

SB501 Support Letter GK.pdf

Uploaded by: Gordon Krabbe

Position: FAV



ENOCH PRATT
free LIBRARY

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB 501 Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established
March 1, 2023
Support

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support **SB 501 Libraries – Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program**. This legislation would significantly improve the ability of public library systems across the state as they attempt to address library building infrastructure needs in their subdivisions.

Upon completion of current projects through FY23, the State's investment of \$82,325,000 will have leveraged more than \$370,000,000 in construction dollars at the local level and ensured that our library buildings remain vibrant, sustainable, and highly responsive to our communities who rely on them.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library has received over \$4.6 million in State support which leveraged another \$15 million in local funding from Baltimore City to support renovations at our Canton, Edmondson, Hampden, Reisterstown, and Waverly branches. The Canton branch was one of the original branches built by Mr. Pratt in the late 1800's and the Hampden branch opened more than 100 years ago. They are examples of historic buildings that can be restored and made functional for the 21st century. The other branches are more than 50 years old and needed significant improvement to address building code and functional needs. All of the communities affected love and use their libraries and are pleased with the improvements. Most important is how we were able to improve on service delivery that promotes lifelong learning, workforce development, and other needs in the community.

Libraries are important hubs in the community helping to stabilize neighborhoods and provide a world of opportunities to users. Access to non-traditional services like social work, pro-bono legal services, healthcare, and more happen in public libraries and to continue that access needs modern up to date library buildings which this legislation would make possible.

I respectfully request that you give SB 501 a favorable report and thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely

Gordon E. Krabbe
Chief Operating Officer

SB 501 - Libraries - Aging Infrastructure_Testimon

Uploaded by: Irene Padilla

Position: FAV

Providing inclusive places to gather is a core principle of public libraries. We offer equitable access to educational advancement, economic opportunity, and lifeline services for all. This funding would enable us to complete more robust upgrades to our oldest branches, exponentially increase the supply of borrowable technology and internet access, and dutifully ensure the staffing needed to meet community needs.

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) has established procedures to receive requests and distribute State capital funding through the annual County Library Capital Grant Program. Since the inception of the grant program in FY 2008, the number of annual awards has varied from 20 to 4 projects.

More than half of the 191 public library buildings in Maryland are over twenty five (25) years old. Consequences of this aging infrastructure are: 5 buildings need a new roof, 3 facilities require alterations for ADA compliance, 4 libraries have HVAC systems that are at the end of their useful life, 26 buildings require technological upgrades in order to provide 21st century library services, 23 existing facilities require general renovation, and 6 buildings have been identified for replacement with a new structure. The total estimated cost of these projects is **\$424.38 million**.

With the escalation of construction costs, grant requests have become larger, thereby decreasing the number of projects/geographic diversity in the distribution of awards.

While the allocation of an additional \$40 million annually is more than 5 times the total allocation of \$7.5 million annually for the existing statewide program, it will not significantly increase the total number of projects being managed by the agency or require additional staff. Since requests are capped at 2 per system under the proposed legislation, the maximum number of requests could not exceed 48 projects.

However, smaller library systems may not be able to manage or match more than one project in a single fiscal year.

The agency anticipates fewer, but larger, requests under this proposed legislation since the minimum request is \$500,000. Under the current grant program the minimum request is \$20,000.

Let's build on Maryland's commitment to its residents so we can strengthen and sustain our library infrastructure for generations to come.

Letter of Support-SB 501-Libraries-Aging Infrastru

Uploaded by: Janet Salazar

Position: FAV



Centreville 121 South Commerce St., Centreville, MD, 21617 | 410-758-0980

Kent Island 200 Library Circle, Stevensville, MD, 21666 | 410-643-8161

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB 501- Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established
March 1, 2023
Support

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

I am writing in favor of SB 501- Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established. The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) has established procedures to receive requests and distribute State capital funding through the annual County Library Capital Grant Program. This bill and its additional funding are critical to library building and renovation projects across the state.

More than half of the 191 public library buildings in Maryland are over twenty-five (25) years old. Consequences of this aging infrastructure are: 5 buildings need a new roof, 3 facilities require alterations for ADA compliance, 4 libraries have HVAC systems that are at the end of their useful life, 26 buildings require technological upgrades in order to provide 21st century library services, 23 existing facilities require general renovation, and 6 buildings have been identified for replacement with a new structure. The total estimated cost of these projects is \$424.38 million. The Centreville Branch of the Queen Anne's County Library is one of those buildings that is over 25 years old.

Queen Anne's County Library has been awarded a total of \$3,825,000 in construction funds through the Maryland Library Capital Grant Program between FY 2018 – FY 2022. The awarding of this funding brought the dream of an expanded Kent Island Branch to fruition, taking the branch from an undersized 10,000 square feet to over 20,000 square feet, to better serve this growing community. After years of planning, feasibility studies, and talks with our community and our elected officials, Phase 1 of our expansion project was completed in March, 2022 with Phase 2 being completed in May of 2023. This grant funding provided our community access to electric car charging stations; multiple small group study rooms for our students and tutors as well as small business owners to use; a maker-space to foster innovation; multiple large meeting rooms to facilitate community gatherings; expanded collections to support our community's love of learning; and so much more. This grant funding was instrumental to making our dreams a reality. This funding also came with a 50% match from our county, which meant our commissioners had to make hard decisions about other, equally important county capital projects.

Support for this bill will provide other public library projects the funding they need to positively impact their communities and continue to foster the love of learning. In Queen Anne's County, the need for a branch in the north part of our county has been identified as the number one priority in our Facilities Master Plan. In addition, our second priority is upgrading and expanding our Centreville Branch which is over 50 years old. This bill will make funding available to help our county make these projects a reality. With so many competing priorities for county funding, the 20% match is critical to helping not only Queen Anne's County, but other rural counties, make library building projects a priority.

In conclusion, I wish to thank members of the General Assembly for supporting public libraries. Supporting this bill will build Maryland's commitment to its residents so we can strengthen and sustain our library infrastructure for generations to come.

I respectfully request that you fully support the SB 501- Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established.

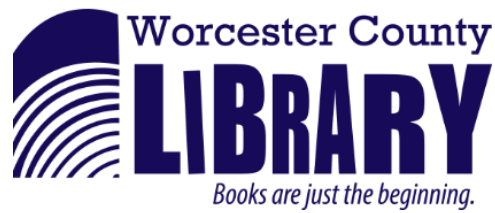
Sincerely,

Janet Salazar
Director

Testimony SB 501 Worcester Co Library Board.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeffrey Smith

Position: FAV



**Testimony in support of SB 501 Libraries – Aging Infrastructure
Capital Improvement Grant Program before the Budget and Taxation Committee
February 28, 2023**

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

We write to you today in full support of SB 501 which establishes the Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program to be administered by the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA).

This Grant Program provides the necessary framework to support the current and growing capital needs of libraries throughout the state. More than half of the 191 public libraries in Maryland are over twenty-five years old. Infrastructure needs range from roof replacements to technological upgrades to general renovations, and 6 buildings have been identified for replacement. The total estimated cost for statewide projects exceeds \$424 million.

MSLA has developed procedures to receive requests and distribute State capital funding through the annual County Library Capital Grant Program. As project costs have escalated, grant requests have become larger, thereby decreasing the number of projects and geographic diversity in the distribution of awards. This funding would enable us to complete more robust upgrades to our oldest branches and ensure that all Maryland communities have access to 21st century library service.

For the Worcester County Library, this legislation is particularly timely. We are in the design phase for a new library to serve Pocomoke and the southern end of our County, replacing a nearly 53 year old building. Our most recent cost estimate completed in January 2023 shows a project total of \$9,354,000 (including a 7% escalation contingency). This funding would enable us to increase our collections and community meeting space, as well as expand access to the internet and borrowable technology.

Let's build on Maryland's commitment to its residents so we can strengthen and sustain our library infrastructure for generations to come. We strongly encourage you to fully support SB 501.

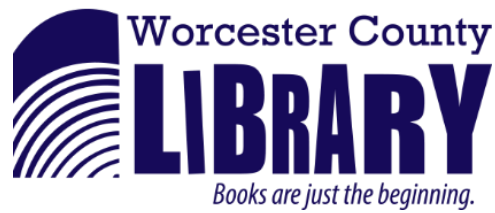
Sincerely,

Worcester County Library Board of Trustees

SB 501 testimony in support Feb 2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Ranck

Position: FAV



BILL:	Senate Bill 501	DATE:	March 1, 2023
SUBJECT:	Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established	COMMITTEE:	Budget and Taxation
SPEAKER:	Jennifer Ranck	POSITION:	Favorable

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in full support of SB 501. This Grant Program provides the necessary framework to support the current and growing capital needs of libraries throughout the state. More than half of the 191 public libraries in Maryland are over twenty-five years old. Infrastructure needs range from roof replacements to technological upgrades to general renovations, and six buildings have been identified for replacement. The total estimated cost for statewide projects exceeds \$424 million.

The Maryland State Library Agency has developed procedures to receive requests and distribute State capital funding through the annual County Library Capital Grant Program. As project costs have escalated, grant requests have become larger, thereby decreasing the number of projects and geographic diversity in the distribution of awards. This funding would enable us to complete more robust upgrades to our oldest branches and ensure that all Maryland communities have access to 21st century library service.

For the Worcester County Library, this legislation is particularly timely. We are in the design phase for a new library branch to serve Pocomoke and the southern end of our County, replacing a nearly 53 year old building. Although we have a wonderful Maintenance Department, last winter the branch lost heat on four different occasions. Attendance for our larger family programs is often limited because we lack adequate meeting space. There are only a couple of spots where patrons can easily plug in their own laptops and devices. Outlets are hidden behind bookshelves and often staff will see clever teens on the floor charging their tablets after school. Our most recent cost estimate completed in January 2023 shows a project total of \$9,354,000. This funding will enable our library to expand collections, programming space, study rooms, and technology resources to one of the neediest areas in our County. Twenty percent of children in Pocomoke live below the poverty line. A new high performance, low maintenance building with inspirational areas for learning and enjoyment will impact our community for years to come.

Libraries touch the lives of thousands of people, of all ages, every day. I respectfully request that you fully support SB 501.

WCLF_SB_501_Feb_2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Ranck

Position: FAV



**Testimony in Support of SB 501 Libraries – Aging Infrastructure
Capital Improvement Grant Program before the Budget and Taxation Committee
February 28, 2023**

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

On behalf of the Worcester County Library Foundation, I submit this letter of support of SB 501 which focuses on establishing the Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program to be administered by the Maryland State Library Agency.

This program supports upgrades to older libraries and ensures the communities have access to up to date library services. Library services are particularly needed in rural, underserved communities.

Current efforts are underway in Worcester County to design and build a new library in Pocomoke. This community has unique needs, and the library is a hub of the community. Twenty percent (20%) of the children in Pocomoke live below the poverty line, and the proposed library site is located within walking distance of three public schools serving students preK-12th grade.

The current library is housed in a building that is over 50 years old. The library has outgrown the current space. A new library will enhance not only the town of Pocomoke but also the surrounding rural area. Access to computers and internet connections is essential to this area; an upgraded facility will better serve the residents.

The Worcester County Library Foundation enthusiastically supports this legislation.

Sincerely,

Donna R. Main, Ed.D.

Worcester County Library Foundation member
Worcester County Public Schools Educator (retired)

Prince George's - Support - SB501 - Libraries - A

Uploaded by: Nicholas Brown

Position: FAV



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

SB 501 testimony SA.pdf

Uploaded by: Skip Auld

Position: FAV



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB 501 - Libraries – Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant
Program
February 27, 2023 – Support

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Committee Members,

I am writing in **support of SB 501 Libraries – Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program**. Since 2015, Anne Arundel County Public Libraries have received \$5.1 million in capital grant funds through the State Grant Program for County Public Library Capital Projects. While these funds have helped us build the new Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library and are aiding our current construction of the Riviera Beach Library, the program itself only awards \$7.5 million annually in capital grants for the whole state, which consists of 24 county library systems!

Nearly 60% of our 17 library locations (16 branches and 1 administrative office) are over 25 years old and 18% of our branches are over 50 years old. Many of our buildings were built before ADA compliance requirements were established. Built before the internet, our electrical systems in those buildings are woefully inadequate for the technology needs of today's workforce development. Additionally, we regularly have to close buildings for the day when the HVAC systems are not functioning properly.

Our needed building repair projects must be added to a long list of backlogged items, which have been carried over for years as funding runs out. SB 501 would allow libraries to invest in older buildings sooner so that we can continue to serve residents. As centers of our communities, libraries have provided COVID test kits and PPE, helped distribute food to the needy, provide a safe gathering place for students after school, help entrepreneurs and jobseekers retool and find work and provide enriching programs for all ages. Capital grant programs for libraries offer a tremendous return on investment for Maryland. I urge your support of SB 501.

Sincerely,

Skip Auld, AACPL Chief Executive Officer

Anne Arundel County
Public Library
5 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis MD 21401
410-222-7371
aacpl.net

BCPL Testimony in support of SB 501 2_28_23.pdf

Uploaded by: Sonia Alcantara-Antoine

Position: FAV



February 28, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair
101 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

I am the CEO of Baltimore County Public Library and the President Elect of the Public Library Association. I write in support of SB501, the Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program for Libraries. This infusion of capital dollars into libraries - \$40 million for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2029 - would be a game changer for the communities served by public libraries.

Baltimore County Public Library has 19 heavily used and well-loved facilities that are visited by nearly 2 million residents annually. The average age of our branches is 50 years old, with the oldest being over 200 years old. Aging facilities means outdated infrastructure systems that are increasingly challenging and costly to maintain. Further, our branches were built at a time when library service looked very different from today.

Today's libraries are community hubs that create opportunities for creativity, discovery, and play. They support students and lifelong learners, and provide dynamic spaces for all age groups, such as BCPL's Storyville locations for early learners and their families. Our social workers on staff, tax assistance services, distribution of snacks and meals to kids facing food insecurity, and very successful *Lawyers in the Library* program are just some of the ways BCPL provides a lifeline to many. Our libraries strengthen the wealth and economic vitality of the community because they support job seekers and job creators, alike. An example of the latter is BCPL's successful *Entrepreneur Academy* where we teach budding entrepreneurs the nuts and bolts of starting a successful business. Public libraries directly address digital inequity in their communities by loaning Wi-Fi Hotspots and Chromebooks so that people have reliable access to the Internet at home. Libraries strengthen democracy, encouraging a well-informed citizenry and facilitating civic engagement and thoughtful discourse. In short, public libraries support healthy and vibrant communities.

Eleven of BCPL's 19 facilities are in need of critical capital investment, to include renovation, expansion, and/or new construction. BCPL has several key capital projects in the pipeline over the coming years, to include Catonsville (Districts 44/44B), Woodlawn (Districts 44/44B), Essex (Districts 6/6), Lansdowne (Districts 44/44A), Towson (Districts 43/43B), Randallstown (Districts 10/10), and North Point (Districts 6/6) branches. The collective cost for all of these projects is roughly \$260 million.

BCPL, and all public libraries in the state, are fortunate to have access to the County Library Capital Grant Program to help with funding of capital projects. During the 2021 session, the General Assembly increased the annual state funding mandate for the library grant program from \$5 million

to \$7.5 million. But even at this level, it will take decades to meet the immediate needs of BCPL and Maryland's public libraries. When you factor that in today's dollars, the average cost for a library renovation is around \$20 million and new construction starts at \$40 million, you can see that available funding for libraries is insufficient to address needs.

This is a national issue as well as a local issue. America's public libraries are an essential part of our nation's infrastructure, with 17,000 locations across the country. As the nation moves forward from the devastating impacts of a global pandemic and related economic and educational losses, rejuvenating libraries in our most distressed communities must be part of that recovery. Libraries need healthy buildings and modern equipment to continue addressing the challenges so many are facing. We want Maryland to have the best libraries in the country.

People often make decisions about where they want to live and raise a family based, in part, on proximity to the public library. Libraries are integral to the quality of life for any community because they strengthen the ability for people to succeed and thrive. Investing in library facilities, therefore, is a direct investment in the communities that use them. I strongly urge passage of SB501 so we can modernize, strengthen, and sustain our library infrastructure for today and tomorrow.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best,



Sonia Alcántara-Antoine
CEO

SB501 Testimony - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Vose

Position: FAV



Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice-Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 28, 2023

Dear Senator Guzzone, Senator Rosapepe, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to add my voice to those asking for your support in passing **Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established**, as a critical and much-needed expansion to the Library Capital Grant program.

The Ruth Enlow Library has five facilities, the newest of which is approaching 20 years old, and the oldest of which is located in a defunct 100+ year old former school building. Oakland's Main Library, indeed, is 73 years old and in serious need of a remodel that accommodates modern technological, ADA and space needs. With many other libraries up and down the State dealing with similar issues, such an initiative would be transformative for the communities they serve.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support of Maryland's libraries and the people they serve!

Sincerely,

Thomas Vose
Director, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County

SB501 testimony - Howard County Library System.pdf

Uploaded by: Tonya Aikens

Position: FAV

Testimony in support of SB501: Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program
Hearing before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 1, 2023
Submitted by Tonya Aikens, Howard County Library System President & CEO

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

I am writing to support SB 501: the Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program.

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) has established procedures to receive requests and distribute State capital funding through the annual County Library Capital Grant Program. Since the inception of the grant program in FY 2008, the number of annual awards has varied from 20 to 4 projects, including all six branches in Howard County.

More than half of the 191 public library buildings in Maryland are more than 25 years old. Consequences of this aging infrastructure are: five buildings need a new roof, three facilities require alterations for ADA compliance, four libraries have HVAC systems that are at the end of their useful life, 26 buildings require technological upgrades in order to provide 21st century library services, 23 existing facilities require general renovation, and six buildings have been identified for replacement with a new structure. The total estimated cost of these projects is **\$424.38 million**.

With the escalation of construction costs, grant requests have become larger, thereby decreasing the number of projects/geographic diversity in the distribution of awards. Most libraries do not request or receive the entire amount of State funds for which they are eligible.

While the allocation of an additional \$40 million annually is more than five times the total allocation of \$7.5 million annually for the existing statewide program, it will not significantly increase the total number of projects being managed by the agency or require additional staff. Since requests are capped at two per system under the proposed legislation, the maximum number of requests could not exceed 48 projects. Smaller library systems may not be able to manage or match more than one project in a single fiscal year.

The agency anticipates fewer, but larger, requests under this proposed legislation since the minimum request is \$500,000. Under the current grant program, the minimum request is \$20,000.

Maryland is one state of 15 that provides funding for the construction of library buildings, and we are thankful for the State and local support for Maryland public libraries. However, there simply isn't enough funding to meet the infrastructure needs of libraries in every community.

During the 2021 session, the General Assembly increased the annual state funding mandate for the library grant program from \$5 million to \$7.5 million. But even at this level, it will take 20 years to meet the immediate needs of Maryland's libraries.

And while new libraries are a reason for celebration, the majority of grants are awarded to smaller, but critical, projects like the renovation of the Hampden Library in Baltimore City, which did not have a public restroom.

This funding would enable us to complete more robust upgrades to our oldest branches, exponentially increase the supply of borrowable technology and internet access, and dutifully ensure the staffing needed to meet community needs. Providing inclusive places to gather is a core principle of public libraries. We offer equitable access to educational advancement, economic opportunity, and lifeline services for all.

Let's build on Maryland's commitment to its residents so we can strengthen and sustain our library infrastructure for generations to come.

We urge you to support SB 501: the Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program and continuing to invest in our communities.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens,
President & CEO