



**Harford County**  
**Public Library**

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January 31, 2025

House Appropriations Committee

Letter of Support

HB 597 – Public Libraries – State Library Resource Center - Funding

Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

The State Library Resource Center (SLRC) provides critical training, programs, resources, and the state's inter-county materials lending service to public, school, and academic libraries. It serves 24 municipalities, which receive access to high-speed broadband Internet through SLRC's statewide SAILOR service.

It is essential that we ensure SLRC effectively continues to serve communities through libraries across the state with sufficient funding and HB 597 provides increased funding beginning in FY 2027. Current funding for FY 26 is \$2.07 per state resident and in FY 2027 increases to \$2.15 reaching \$2.52 in FY 31.

Harford County relies on the Sailor broadband internet service for its 12 locations and outreach vehicles. In addition, residents of our county have access to the Sailor Database Consortium collection and these databases were accessed 8.9 million times throughout the state. Maryland is known as library heaven and its cooperative interlibrary loan network provided by SLRC is a testament to the effectiveness and efficiency of SLRC services. The array of databases provided by SLRC throughout the state would cost libraries and schools \$4.6 million if purchased individually and only cost \$618,000 because of SLRC's consortium power.

Harford County Public Library relies on SLRC training and professional development for its staff along with library staff throughout the state. Of special note is that Harford County Public Library is an active participant in the Digital Maryland project through SLRC which preserves collections from statewide historical societies, schools, and libraries. Digital Maryland houses Harford's Living Treasurers Oral History collection which enables access to anyone throughout the world, at any time. In FY 24, more than 600,000 people visited the Digital Maryland website.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 597 and highlight the value that SLRC provides to Harford as well as to communities throughout Maryland. On behalf of the Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees, Library staff, and our community, please support HB 597. Thank you.

Mary Hastler, CEO  
Harford County Public Library