SMRLA
SOUTHERN MARYLAND
REGIONAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Advancing Library Excellence

February 9, 2026

Senator Guzzone, Chair
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of **SB0378 – Education – Regional Resource Centers and County Libraries--Funding**. This bill will provide per capita funding increases to both regional resource centers like the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) and public libraries around the state. Between FY 2025 and FY 2026, SMRLA's budget from the State increased by $99,700. This increased funding helps SMRLA maintain services to the libraries in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties.

As Southern Maryland grows so does the demand for library services. This fiscal year, SMRLA was able to absorb increased costs for our services thanks to the per capita increase. For example, our materials delivery service which runs five days a week to eleven library branches throughout Southern Maryland increased in cost this year. By changing vendors, SMRLA was able to negotiate more predictable rate increases over a three-year period. Although these increases are reasonable, the cost of this service has generally gone up over time.

Looking ahead to FY 2027, I am aware of at least $71,000 in anticipated increased costs. These increased costs are attributed to current vendor relationships that support our services. If SMRLA's per capita increase did not happen in FY 2027, we would have to pull back on investment in special projects and new initiatives for our public library partners.

A year without a funding increase would effectively be a budget cut for us. Our patrons have come to rely on and to expect high quality library service in Southern Maryland. In SMRLA's case, this is only possible because of the generous support that we receive from the State. As a regional library, we do not have a source of funding from the counties we serve. This makes per capita funding increases especially important to us.

Thank you for your favorable vote on SB0378.

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle

Ashley Teagle, CEO

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