

**Testimony for Capital Funding for Libraries  
Appropriations Committee  
House Committee on Appropriations  
3:00 a.m., March 22, 2010**

**Submitted by Marion W. Francis, Administrator  
Anne Arundel County Public Library**

Dear Chairman Bohanan and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

The County Library Capital Grants Program consists of \$5 million in state funds that were made available to public libraries for capital improvements. This amount was provided by the 2006 legislative agenda and through the efforts of the Maryland library community. It is meant to provide for all 24 jurisdictions in our State. This amount is barely adequate to provide the capital improvements library systems throughout the state now require. We ask that you leave this funding intact.

Most libraries were never designed for the technology they now contain. Adequate space for computers, quiet areas, meeting rooms, spaces for teens and children, and shelving for additional materials must be obtained through capital improvements. Anne Arundel County Public Library consists of 15 branches which serve a population of well over half a million people. While in past years we could count on Anne Arundel County providing us with \$350,000 per year for capital improvements, this year we received no funds at all. Like the other county library systems, we need the capital grant program now, more than ever.

In 2007, we applied for and received a first-ever matching grant from the state to supplement our request for funding capital improvements. We used the grant for two projects that will help guarantee the safety and accessibility of our facilities. The first was an upgrade of the fire safety systems in four branches to bring them up to current National Fire Protection Association code. The project included connecting pull stations to the main fire system, increasing the number of smoke detectors, and adding visual strobes to alert the hearing-impaired to a fire. The second project was the redesign and construction of five service desks to add a lower section to assist patrons with disabilities and to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These were vital projects, made possible by our ability to use both state and local funds.

These capital grants help public libraries throughout the State of Maryland address their growing renovation and construction needs, not only by providing direct funding through grants, but also by giving libraries a tool by which they can leverage local funding to construct and improve public library buildings.

We are grateful for the conception and establishment of the County Library Capital Grants Program and ask that you maintain it at the original \$5 million level as it was approved by both houses of the General Assembly. We thank you for your continued support.