

**Testimony in support of
MSDE – Public Library Grant Program
A Hearing before the House Appropriations Committee
Capital Budget Subcommittee
March 9, 2011**

Chairman Jones and Distinguished Delegates:

On behalf of the Carroll County Public Library (CCPL), I want to thank you for your unanimous approval of the County Public Library Capital Grant Program and ask for your support of full \$5 million funding in FY 2012.

These funds, which require local matching funds, are critical in helping libraries address a backlog of renovation and construction needs. The need for this program is evidenced by the level of application. In FY 2012, the Division of Library Development and Services, MSDE received over \$7.9 million in requests for Public Library Capital Grant Program funding. During the first four years of the program, 19 counties received \$16 million dollars to renovate and build libraries, all of which was at least matched by local dollars. **Even in these most trying economic times, this program is doing exactly what you envisioned. It has allowed county libraries throughout Maryland to leverage local dollars to make significant library building improvements. This is a true State/County partnership.**

That is very much the case in Carroll County. To give you one example of the success of this program, for 28 years the roof of the Westminster Branch leaked regularly and there was no plan to replace it. In FY 2008, when CCPL received \$135,000 in Public Library Capital Grant funds to begin renovation of the Westminster Branch, the County put a new roof on the library. This expenditure far exceeded the required local match. In addition, County Bureau of Facilities staff replaced the windows damaged by roof leaks. In FY 2009, CCPL received \$437,000 for phase two of the renovation. The County not only funded the match, but also County staff did a significant amount of the work. County electricians did the labor to upgrade the entire electrical system and install new light fixtures as an in-kind contribution beyond the local cash match! These improvements to the heavily used (300,000 visits per year) 23,000 sq. ft. branch prepared the library for the next 30 years of service. Everyone is proud of the significant renovation work that has been accomplished through this partnership.

Public Library Capital Grant Program funding has also allowed us to renovate the very busy Eldersburg Branch, which circulates more than 1 million items per year, and the North Carroll Branch, which has seen a 20% increase in business over the past two years. These grant funds are making a tremendous difference in our ability to provide library service to county residents. The total of all of these projects since 2008 has been \$1,089,000 in State Capital Grant funding and \$1,471,000 (not including in-kind) in local funding. In FY 2012, Carroll County's application for renovations at the Mount Airy Branch (\$233,000) has been approved. This will allow us to replace the roof and convert a portion of interior space into a much needed classroom-style computer room. Last year nearly 20,000 people attended programs at the branch, and customers signed up for more than 23,000 sessions on internet computers. Demand for service continues to increase. With the enhancements made possible through this Capital Grant

and local match funding, the library will be able to better serve its customers and meet future service demands.

Looking at the state as a whole, there are 188 public library branches in Maryland or one library for every 30,000 citizens. Most of these libraries were built at least 30 years ago. Many are well over 40 years old. Maryland citizens love and use their libraries. In FY 2009, citizens made **34 million visits to public libraries in Maryland and usage continues to grow**. During this economic downturn, libraries throughout the state are filled with job seekers writing resumes, applying for jobs and using e-government services. Libraries are playing a very important role in providing computer access and connecting people to the internet. This is a service that did not exist when most of the libraries in the State were built. The Public Library Capital Grant program is helping us provide adequate space and infrastructure to meet the growing demand for computer access.

Thank you for your consideration of full \$5 million funding for the Public Library Capital Grant Program in FY 2012. Your support will help public libraries better meet the needs of those who use our public libraries every day.

Respectfully submitted by
Lynn Wheeler
Director
Carroll County Public Library