



SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Crisfield · Ewell · Princess Anne

March 16, 2010

The Honorable John L. Bohanan Jr.
Education & Economic Development Subcommittee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21404-1991

Re: Support for County Library Capital Grants Program (March 22 Hearing, Room 145)

Chairman John L. Bohanan Jr. and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of full funding for the County Library Capital Grants Program in FY2011.

The Capital Grants Program for libraries is critical to the rural counties in Maryland, where we face a growing population with limited budgets. We are continually looking for ways to leverage our resources. The proposed library capital funding allows us to persuade local decision makers and private donors to support 21st century library services and facilities.

The Somerset County Library System faces an ongoing challenge as demand for our free services increases during times of economic hardship. We see firsthand how the library impacts the quality of life for our community and we are committed to maintaining our essential services. Last year we had an 11% increase in the number of library visits. But our success also brings challenges. Our facilities do not adequately serve the public. The Princess Anne branch library desperately needs a new boiler and we are continually plagued with leaking issues. The Crisfield branch library is less than one-third the size of our Princess Anne branch and has half the number of computers and no meeting room.

The Capital Grants program has been a tremendous benefit to us over the past several years. It has enabled us to work on a space reallocation plan to revitalize our Princess Anne branch and allowed us to pursue a new site for our branch in Crisfield. Without this program, we will not be able to move forward with these projects and will likely be in a holding pattern for years to come.

I urge the committee to fully fund the County Library Capital Grants Program for FY2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Ranck, Library Director

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