



Dear Friends,

Governor O'Malley recently released Maryland's 2015 proposed budget, and I am pleased to report to you that it includes funding for many vital projects on the Lower Shore. The budget includes more than \$97 million for new facilities and facilities renovations on the campuses of Salisbury University, Wor-Wic Community College, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, \$11.52 million for school renovation and construction in Somerset and Wicomico counties, \$1.55 million for the new Crisfield library, \$1 million for the Ocean City Beach Replenishment fund, and \$1.7 million for right-of-way acquisition to continue the dualization of Route 113.

The Eastern Shore delegation had a great meeting on Friday, January 24. The superintendents of all nine county boards of education were present to brief the delegation about both their successes and needs to continue educating our children. Dr. Memo Diriker, director of the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University, informed us that for every \$1.00 spent on education on the Eastern Shore, we see a return on that investment of almost \$2.00. Maryland Superintendent of Schools Dr. Lillian Lowery discussed efforts to implement the common core curriculum and the need to help prevent high school graduates from requiring remedial courses at the college level, as well as efforts to expand universal pre-K for all children in Maryland.

On Friday, January 24, House Speaker Busch and Senate President Miller released their Economic Development Agenda for the 2014 session. The agenda includes:

- Creating a commission to review Maryland's Economic Development Support and Business Climate.
- Reforming Maryland's estate tax to the federal standard to make us more competitive with surrounding states.
- Allowing you as a taxpayer improved transparency on Maryland state tax forms. This enables you as a Maryland taxpayer to more clearly see how your tax money is being spent on the programs throughout our state.

Coming up this week, bill hearings will be held for several pieces of legislation that I have sponsored:

[Senate Bill 27, Tuesday, January 28, 1:00 p.m.](#): This bill will require that an economic impact study be undertaken before the Department of Agriculture can implement the phosphorous management tool. In order to make the right decision, it is vital that state officials understand the

full impact of the regulations that they propose. It will be held in the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

[SB 59, Wednesday, January 29, 1:00 p.m.](#): SB 59 will allow businesses to deduct the payroll taxes they pay on tipped employees from their state taxes. This legislation will put our local small businesses on equal footing with the federal tax code. The hearing for SB 59 will be held in the Budget & Taxation Committee.

[SB 36, Wednesday, January 30, 1:00 p.m.](#): SB 36 will require the “POW/MIA” flag to be flown on the grounds of state buildings. It is important that we honor our brave combat veterans who have been deemed missing in action, or prisoners of war and whose fate is still unknown. The hearing for SB 36 will be held in the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Knowing how crucial small businesses, agriculture, tourism, and watermen are to our way of life on the Shore, I’ve included links below that will take you to the General Assembly website and let you see all the bills filed on those topics. Click the following links to read legislation that has been sponsored dealing with those issues:

- Click here to see legislation related to [Agriculture](#)
- Click here to see legislation related to [Tourism](#)
- Click here to see legislation related to [Small Business](#)
- Click here to see legislation related to [Watermen](#)
- Click here to search legislation by a [large variety of subjects](#)

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I am responsible for reviewing legislation related to energy, health insurance, labor law, transportation and a variety of other important issues. Last week, the Finance Committee had a busy week of bill hearings and voting sessions; follow everything that the Finance Committee does by [clicking here](#).

For more information on these bills, or any other bills, please reach out to our office at 410-841-3645 or toll-free at 1-800-492-7122, ex. 3645. You can also email us at [james.mathias@senate.state.md.us](mailto:james.mathias@senate.state.md.us). As always, if there is anything I can do to be of assistance to you, please contact me anytime.

Always working for you...and together getting the job done,

Jim