



Dear Friends,

Last week a hearing was held on [SB 250](#), one of the many local bills I have sponsored this session. This legislation will allow Somerset County to issue a Class 7 micro-brewery license to allow micro-breweries to brew and sell their beer both in their brewery and at specific off-site events. [SB 641](#), the Kathleen A. Mathias Oral Chemotherapy Improvement Act of 2014, which will extend the protections of the Kathleen A. Mathias Chemotherapy Parity Act of 2012 to include insurance policies sold through the Maryland Healthcare Exchange, and require that they provide coverage for oral chemotherapy. This bill will give people battling cancer the peace of mind that insurance companies will cover their chemotherapy treatments. [SB 642](#), which relates to health insurance and will repeal both a 2015 termination date and a final 2014 reporting date related to the assignment of benefits and the reimbursement of non-preferred providers

I am excited to share that [SB 440](#), which will allow Somerset County to create a service award program for members of the volunteer fire departments and EMS companies, has passed unanimously out of the Senate this week and is now awaiting passage in the House of Delegates.

Following our cancelled Eastern Shore delegation meeting on Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, we had a full agenda this past Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Wor-Wic Community College president, Dr. Ray Hoy, and Chesapeake College president, Dr. Barbara Viniar, both visited us and spoke with us about the importance of fully funding community colleges spoke to the delegation about fully funding community colleges under the CADE formula. The CADE formula provides funding as a percentage of what the state provides to state universities. That formula used to pay 26%, but given the economic difficulties of the state, that percentage has been lowered to 19.7%; and in the current proposed state budget that funding would be lowered to 19.2%.

Secretary Summers from the Department of the Environment spoke to the delegation next. After a discussion about on-going efforts with the department, I spoke with Secretary Summers about creating round-table discussions between the department and the businesses they inspect to allow them to questions and work to correct any potential violations before a formal inspection is conducted, and to help develop a relationship between the department and the businesses. Finally, [Delmarva Home Relief](#) spoke with the delegation about their work on preventing home foreclosures and keeping people in their homes through loan modification, coordinating short sales, and foreclosure mediation.

This week, there are no bill hearings scheduled for legislation that I have introduced.

Knowing how crucial [small businesses](#), [agriculture](#), [tourism](#), and [watermen](#) are to our way of life on the Shore, these links will take you to the General Assembly website and let you see all the bills filed on those topics. You can also click [here to search for legislation on other topics](#).

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 me at [james.mathias@senate.state.md.us](mailto:james.mathias@senate.state.md.us). As always, if I can be of assistance to you, or if you have an idea you want to share with me, please contact me anytime.

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

Jim