



Dear Friends,

So far, this legislative session has been very busy, and as we approach the halfway mark before we adjourn for the year, it is only going to get busier. Last week a hearing was held on [SB 440](#), one of the many local bills I have sponsored this session. This legislation will allow Somerset County to create a volunteer service and reward program for qualified members of volunteer fire departments, ambulance companies, and rescue squads. Allowing Somerset County to set up a fund to pay benefits to those volunteer fire company and ambulance company members who have served their community for 20 or 25 years, respectively is crucial for the future safety and security of the county. The men and women of our volunteer fire companies and ambulance rescue squads are vital to the safety and wellbeing of our communities on the Eastern Shore and this bill will help retain their crucial services.

I am pleased to let you know that my bill, [SB 441](#), which would dissolve the Worcester County Bingo Board and transfer its responsibilities to the Worcester County Department of Development Review and Permitting, passed unanimously out of the Senate and is now awaiting passage in the House of Delegates.

Due to the inclement weather, the weekly Eastern Shore delegation meeting was cancelled on Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. Our next meeting is this coming Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 9 a.m.

This week, bill hearings were held for the following pieces of legislation that I have sponsored:

[SB 250, Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m.](#): SB 250 will allow Somerset County to issue a Class 7 micro-brewery license. This license will allow micro-breweries in Somerset County to brew and sell their beer both in their brewery and at specific off-site events. This legislation is important because it will allow for the growth of micro-breweries in Somerset County. This legislation was requested by the Somerset County Commissioners. The hearing for SB 250 was held in the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs committee.

[SB 641, Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m.](#): SB 641 is the Kathleen A. Mathias Oral Chemotherapy Improvement Act of 2014 and it 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 make sure that people battling cancer will not have to worry about insurance companies only providing coverage for certain types of chemotherapy treatments. The hearing for SB 250 was held in the Finance committee.

[SB 642, Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m.](#): SB 642 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. The hearing for SB 642 was held in the Finance committee.

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