FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 12, 2012

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DELEGATION ANNOUNCES 2012 SESSION
ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE COUNTY

ANNAPOLIS – Although a Special Session will likely be called to complete work on the State's operating budget, the 32-member Montgomery County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly today announced other 2012 legislative accomplishments for Montgomery County.

Among its major accomplishments, the Montgomery County Delegation secured over $40 million in State grants for public school construction. Additional public school construction funds will be allocated by the Board of Public Works in May.

The Delegation was also pleased that Montgomery College was awarded its request for $8 million. These capital funds will be used to complete the Rockville Science Center East project and begin work on the Rockville Student Services Center and Germantown Sciences and Applied Studies Building. Capital funding was also provided again this year for the new Silver Spring Library, which should be completed in the fall of 2014. In addition, nearly $3 million was secured to underwrite a number of community projects sponsored by Delegation members. This list of small grants will allow State investment to support the arts, recreation facilities, and, to also extend the District of Columbia's successful bikeshare program into Montgomery County.

The Delegation also fought to ensure that Montgomery County schools would not be penalized by the State for the County's inability to meet its State mandated local funding requirement last year. In the same piece of legislation, the Delegation was helpful in ensuring that the actions Montgomery County had taken in 2012 to create a sustainable local funding level for its public schools could not be revised by the State Board of Education. While a shift of teacher pension costs from the State to the counties will begin in fiscal year 2013, the Montgomery County Delegation supported changes to the Governor's plan to lessen its impact.

The State Legislature, with the support of the Delegation, passed several environmental bills, including increasing the Bay Restoration Fee. This action will help ensure that financing will be in place for substantial upgrades to the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is utilized by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. Other bills that will help protect the environment related to improving stormwater management and strengthened oversight of land use decisions for areas that will be served by septic systems.

The Delegation also supported several measures related to residential home foreclosures, including legislation that allows for mediation before a home is foreclosed upon.

Two important economic development measures were also supported. First, legislation passed extending the Businesses that Create New Jobs tax credit, which primarily benefits Discovery Communications. The extension acknowledges the key role Discovery has had in the redevelopment of Silver Spring. Maryland Innovation Initiative sponsored by a number of Montgomery County legislators also passed. The bill's purpose is to promote technology transfer from Maryland's public and private nonprofit research institutions to the private sector.

A great disappointment for the Delegation was the lack of progress on passing long overdue legislation to significantly increase State transportation revenues. It seems the timing of raising taxes is never good; but, it is of critical importance to Montgomery County that new State revenues become available so that the State is able to make much greater investments in improving our transportation infrastructure. It is key to our economic success and the State's. Unfortunately, this remains unfinished business, along with no rational resolution to the State's fiscal year 2013 operating budget.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Melanie Wenger, 240-888-0308 (Montgomery County Office of Intergovernmental Relations)

Sara Hartman, 301-858-3018 (Montgomery County Delegation Administrator)

Montgomery County Delegation website: www.montgomerycountydelegation.com

ATTACHMENTS