EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

May 8, 2012

The Honorable Roger Berliner
President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Berliner:

I am writing to you on behalf of the East County Citizens Advisory Board (ECCAB) to express our support for Expedited Bill 17-12, Fire and Rescue Service - Emergency Medical Services – Reimbursement, which would authorize the County to seek reimbursement for EMS transport services from insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid.

On April 7, 2010, this Board submitted a letter in support of Bill 13-10, which was essentially identical to the current bill and was ultimately passed by the Council. While the legislation was later overturned by referendum, we believe that the current fiscal circumstances, particularly as affected by state actions including the pending teacher pension shift and Maintenance of Effort legislation, warrant passage of this bill. Bill 17-12 is transparent, serves the interests of the community and is a prudent process for funding critical fire and rescue services. Many other jurisdictions nationwide and in the DC metropolitan area, including the District of Columbia, have similar reimbursement programs. Moreover, under this legislation no Montgomery County resident would receive a bill for emergency transport services and low-income non-county residents would be eligible to apply for a waiver of the fee.

We are pleased that the bill includes language that sets aside EMS reimbursement revenue for supplementing fire and rescue services. However, we would appreciate further clarification in the bill as to how this revenue will be allocated between County and volunteer fire and rescue services.

The EMS reimbursement program will provide Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Services with the funds needed to maintain high levels of service to all parts of the County, and support our local volunteer departments. We urge the Council to pass this legislation without delay.

Sincerely,

Marva Deskins
Chair, East County Citizens Advisory Board

cc: Hon. Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
Chief Richard Bowers, Fire and Rescue Services

Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center
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