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MONTGOMERY COUNTY DELEGATION ANNOUNCES 2010 SESSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE COUNTY

ANNAPOLIS – The 32-member Montgomery County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly today announced 2010 legislative accomplishments for Montgomery County.

Among its major accomplishments, the Montgomery County Delegation secured \$20.3 million for Montgomery College to help complete the construction of the Germantown Bioscience Education Center and equip the new Rockville Science Center.

Capital funding was also secured in the fiscal year 2011 budget for two library projects in Montgomery County: Gaithersburg and Silver Spring.

The Montgomery County legislators secured nearly \$2.7 million for 21 other local capital projects, including the Capital Area Food Bank, CASA Multicultural Service Center, National Center for Children and Families, and various health, recreation, and cultural facilities located throughout the County.

The Montgomery County Delegation helped secure \$250 million for K-12 public school construction projects across the State. Thus far, slightly over \$20 million has been allocated to Montgomery County. However, \$67 million has yet to be awarded. The Board of Public Works will meet on May 5th to allocate this remaining amount. Montgomery County hopes that its fiscal year 2011 final allocation will be at least \$30 million.

The Delegation also fought to ensure that the Montgomery County Public Schools were not harmed by last year's State Board of Education decision denying the County's request for relief from the State's maintenance of effort requirement.

The severe economic downturn has taken its toll on all tax revenues, including transportation revenues. Not only was the State's transportation capital program impacted, but the allocation of highway user revenues to counties was all but eliminated to help balance the State budget. Montgomery County Delegation members were sponsors of legislation creating a Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Funding to develop options for sustainable long term revenue sources for transportation.

“In another very tough year, I am pleased that we worked together to secure more than \$44 million in State capital funds for Montgomery County projects,” said Delegate Brian Feldman, chairman of the Montgomery House Delegation. “On the operating side, K-12 education funding was increased by \$53 million to recognize our growing enrollment and needs. While the issue of who should bear financial responsibility for paying teacher pensions came to the forefront, a compromise was reached that will allow an independent analysis to be completed before a final decision is made.”

To help stimulate the economy, the Delegation supported bills to create a tax credit for employers that hire new employees, remove the sunset on the research and development tax credit, and revise the timetable for implementation of the new stormwater management regulations. Specific to Montgomery County, legislation was passed to allow the County to take an equity position in Montgomery County companies that receive assistance from the County's Economic Development Fund.

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett said "Our Delegation was faced with a number of very difficult decisions. The state of the economy has impacted every level of government and there are few good options for any of us when it comes to balancing our budgets. Montgomery County legislators again this year worked effectively to protect the interests of the County and the State."

On the public safety front, as of October 1st, it will be illegal to talk on a handheld cell phone since numerous accidents occur because of distracted driving. Also, a number of bills passed that strengthen the laws pertaining to sex offenders.

The protection of the environment continued to be front and center with a decision to double the amount of funds originally included in the fiscal year 2011 budget for Chesapeake Bay Restoration programs. Program Open Space dollars were fully protected at the State and local levels. An Administration bill, with significant support from Montgomery County legislators, extends for five years tax incentives for electricity generated from renewable resources. Montgomery County legislators either sponsored or were active supporters of a number of other important pieces of legislation to protect the environment.

Senator Rich Madaleno, Chairman of the Senate Delegation, said "The 2010 Session is behind us now, and it's time to look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. I am hopeful that the economy will begin to recover and we'll have greater ability to make the types of investments we need to make in our County to ensure it remains the economic engine of the State."

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ATTACHMENTS