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Cecil County Citizens:

Before I go further, let me again state how sorry I am for the families of the students and faculty who died unnecessarily on Wednesday, February 14th in Parkland, Florida. I can only imagine how devastated their families feel. It appears that those in positions to make a difference and confront this repeating tragedy cannot find the will or the means to see it through. There has been much talk and rhetoric on what must be done. Locally, we work tirelessly with Cecil County Public Schools, Cecil County Sheriff's Office and all local law enforcement agencies, as well as the Cecil County Department of Emergency Services to provide safe schools for our students and prevent such tragedies from occurring. We must follow the lead of our young voices and continue to impress upon our elected officials that continued inaction is not a choice.

As you are aware, I hosted the annual County Executive's FY 2019 Citizen Input Session for the public on February 13, 2018. It is estimated that about fifty people attended and eighteen citizens signed up to deliver their thoughts on the upcoming budget. I appreciate the effort that everyone made to attend and for the time to prepare remarks for my consideration.

At the beginning of the meeting, Rebecca Anderson, Budget Manager for Cecil County Government, gave an overview of the budget development process and some of the variables we must take into consideration as the budget process moves forward. As was stated in her presentation, I intend to deliver the budget to the County Council on March 30, 2018. The Council President, Joyce Bowsbey, will then guide the process culminating in Council action at the end of May or early June.

My priorities for the FY 2019 budget are consistent with the County's strategic plan:

1. **Economic Development:** We must continue to encourage economic growth by making the necessary changes to bring new business and jobs to Cecil County.
2. **Fiscal Stability:** All county department leaders are charged with maximizing operational efficiencies as we continued a balanced budget philosophy.
3. **Educational Strength:** The strategic plan prioritizes the advance of lifelong educational opportunities for all citizens. I will continue to support the adequate funding of education at all levels.
4. **Infrastructure:** The FY 2019 budget will support the installation of critical infrastructure in the Route 40/I-95 growth corridor to allow for continued business and residential growth.
5. **Safe, Healthy and Active Communities:** We will continue to advance initiatives to fight drug problems, fund the public safety needs of Law Enforcement and Emergency Services and support the total quality of life for all citizens

Some of the challenges we face include, but are not limited to:

1. Delivering the services Cecil County citizens expect and deserve while seeking more effective and efficient strategies;
2. Building and retaining a high quality workforce;
3. Equipping public safety departments and personnel with the most effective communication technology tools as these men and women strive to keep our County safe;
4. Continue an aggressive infrastructure expansion within the growth corridor to maintain the County's economic development momentum; and
5. Provide the necessary funding for our education institutions to ensure a high quality workforce and productive citizenry. Education is the number one prevention strategy to combat the misuse and abuse of drugs.

The members of my staff and I will work diligently over the next month to deliver a budget that is balanced between Cecil County's needs and the resources available. We are making great strides forward in Fiscal Year 2018 and will strive to do even better in Fiscal Year 2019.

You deserve nothing but our best. Thank you for your support.

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
County Executive