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CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Dear Cecil County Citizens,

Last night, during the County Council's Legislative Session, the members adopted several bills and one resolution that sets the path forward for Fiscal Year 2019, which commences on July 1, 2018. Included in their actions, were the *Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2019* (\$32,271,000) and the *Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance – FY 2019* (\$274,718,426). In addition, the Council adopted the tax rate (\$1.0414 per \$100 assessed value) for FY 2019, which remains unchanged from this year.

The work to create a budget is actually a year-round effort by my staff and those who work for agencies that receive taxpayer funding included in the Cecil County Government FY2019 Proposed Budget. Officially, the process began when I submitted my proposed Fiscal Year 2019 Capital and Operating Budget to the County Council on March 30, 2018. Over the past two months, the members of the County Council have reviewed the FY2019 proposed budget and discussed requests with individual departments, divisions and agencies. The Council members held a public hearing on May 22nd to listen to public comment and conducted follow-up budget deliberations on, May 29th at the County Administration Building.

Special recognition and appreciation is extended to the members of the County Council for their efforts to thoroughly review the proposed budgets. This year, for the first time, the Council hired an accounting firm, Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra, to review the budget and provide comments for the Council's consideration. I am very pleased that the firm recommended that the Council pass the operating budget.

The report also noted that for the second year the Operating Budget does not use funds from the unassigned fund balance as a revenue source. This allows us to be better prepared for emergencies such as the devastating floods in Ellicott City. In addition, we expect a favorable reaction from the bond rating agencies, which means that we will continue to be able to borrow money for our major capital building projects at lower interest rates resulting in millions of dollars saved over the life of the bonds.

After recognizing the significant efforts that many people extended to develop, submit, review and finally adopt both the Capital and Operating budgets, the truth is, the real work begins July 1st. Cecil County has progressed significantly this past year and a half with major economic growth exhibited by the nearly 5 million square feet of new commercial space and the creation of over 1,500 jobs, with even more to come. Infrastructure, to support the continued business growth and to connect more citizens to public utilities, is being installed along the Route 40 growth corridor.

Recreational programs and facilities continue to be expanded to provide more opportunities for our citizens to participate in healthy activities. Our partnership with the Cecil County Public Library, Cecil College and Cecil County Public Schools continues to evolve, as more learning opportunities are available to provide a well-

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qualified workforce for 21st century employment. Cecil County Government has adopted a focused customer service philosophy, working tirelessly to find ways to better meet the needs of our businesses and citizens more effectively and efficiently.

Going forward, my staff and I will strive to improve communication and reach out to our component units, as well as the volunteer fire companies, to identify needs **before** a proposed budget is unveiled and to make certain everyone understands the County's financial position and help find ways to ensure that the services Cecil County citizens deserve are met.

Today marks Cecil's 344th year as an established county in Maryland. Our community has grown tremendously since the early days! Though we are proud of our many recent accomplishments, we will not become complacent. Just as our forefathers did, we must move ahead expeditiously if we are going to be the preferred location for new businesses and provide a setting in which existing businesses can grow and expand. Our goal is to create an environment for our citizens to live, thrive and raise their families. We are moving in the right direction and we will continue to work hard for every citizen in Cecil County.

Again, thank you for your support as we all work together to *move Cecil County forward!*

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
County Executive