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CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Dear Cecil County Citizens,

It is hard to believe that it has been nearly 10-weeks since the coronavirus pandemic ignited in our country and, ultimately, changed the way we do everything in our day-to-day lives. In Cecil County, much like the rest of the world, we are more cognizant of how we work, educate, and socialize – every aspect of our interaction with others has changed dramatically. We have learned to respond to, and plan for, every situation in our lives based on how our health and safety may be affected due to this virus.

Today, the Cecil County Health Department announced that there have been 353 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Cecil County, and 212 of those confirmed cases have been released from isolation, meaning they have recovered and are no longer symptomatic. Sadly, we have lost 23 people to this dreadful disease.

Last week, Governor Hogan announced that he was lifting the stay-at-home order and encouraging a safer-at-home advisory. With that, he also placed the state in Stage #1 of his Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery Plan, which allowed for the soft reopening of retail businesses, certain recreational activities, barber shops and hair salons, with specific social distancing rules in place in order to operate.

Governor Hogan also declared that local government leaders – in our case, the county executive – could exercise their own additional restrictions, as deemed necessary, in each county. As you know, I opted to follow the governor's Stage #1 guidelines and not incorporate any additional restrictions for our citizens. The intent is that we return to normalcy and begin operating in a way that allows our local economy to begin to recover, but remain vigilant of the detrimental effects of this virus by continuing to social distance and practice good hygiene.

It is my hope that our numbers will soon level off and that we will be ready to move in to Stage #2 upon Governor Hogan's guidance

Earlier this week a majority of the County Council members adopted the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget and an amended Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Budget. In addition, a majority of the Council voted to continue the same tax rates that have been in place the past three years, therefore not increasing the tax rates for the next fiscal year. This is possible because of the tremendous commercial and industrial economic growth achieved over the past three years providing over four thousand new jobs.

In a capital budget presentation to the Council in April finance department representatives shared that we would not be progressing with the new capital projects listed in the report pending a thorough review of revenue estimates in relation to actual funding received. The unknown economic impact of COVID-19 in Maryland and Cecil County requires that we proceed most conservatively to ensure that we stay within our means. I have no

issue with the Council removing those projects. If the economy is not negatively impacted, I will review the capital projects in question and if determined to be a high priority, seek an amendment to reinstate from the Council.

I am pleased that our operating budget continues to be balanced without use of the *Emergency Reserve Fund*. Given our current economic environment with the unknown short and long-term impacts from COVID-19, it is critically important that we have emergency funds in reserve so we can continue to provide our citizens the required and expected services without increasing their tax burden. I also will remind Cecil citizens that the Finance Department monitors the budget daily as it is a plan not a mandate. Should revenues come in less than those projected, the budget expenditures will be adjusted accordingly.

Memorial Day is celebrated the last Monday in May (5/25/2020). Originally known as *Decoration Day*, Memorial Day became an official federal holiday in 1971. It is a day that all Americans remember and are asked to salute the men and women who have given their lives while serving in the military services defending our country and our freedoms.

On Monday, May 25, 2020 while celebrating Memorial Day with family and friends, pause at 3:00 p.m. to remember those who served and died for us. In addition, thank the veterans living in our county and the men and women who currently serve in the military.

In this most difficult time as we all continue to address the realities of living with the coronavirus, I hope you find time this holiday weekend to relax with loved ones and to renew your will to continue to work together to win this fight.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan J. McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
Cecil County Executive