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MONTGOMERY COUNTY DELEGATION ANNOUNCES 2013 SESSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE COUNTY

ANNAPOLIS – A busy and productive 90-Day Session ending on an upbeat note was followed today by the 32-member Montgomery County Delegation announcing its 2013 legislative accomplishments for Montgomery County.

After a decade of attempts to advance Montgomery County's number one priority – transportation funding – a major transportation revenue enhancement bill finally passed. The new revenue will allow the State to help underwrite the costs of key transit projects, including the Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway, and a backlog of major road projects. Passed with near unanimous support from the Delegation, the package is structured in a manner to ensure sustainable revenue streams to support projects in Montgomery County and around the State for many years to come.

In addition to this major accomplishment, the State will be making other infrastructure investments in the County. For example, the Montgomery County Delegation secured over \$28 million in State grants for public school construction. Additional public school construction funds will be allocated by the Board of Public Works in May.

The Delegation was also pleased that Montgomery College was awarded its request for funds to complete the Germantown Campus Bioscience Education Center and to begin the Rockville Campus Science West renovation. The Universities at Shady Grove (USG) moved a step closer to constructing a fourth building on the campus by securing an additional \$5 million for planning and design. In addition, nearly \$3 million was secured to underwrite a number of community projects sponsored by Delegation members. This list of small grants will provide State investments to support the arts and park and recreation facilities.

After years of State budget cuts due to the economic downturn, State aid allocations to the counties finally stabilized this year. The funding formulas for police aid, local health, and community college grants were restored to statutory levels. In Montgomery County, K-12 education aid grew by nearly \$14 million. This was due to significant enrollment growth again this year and Delegation efforts to ensure that technical changes to formulas did not harm the County's public school system.

Delegation members were among the sponsors of several important economic development measures that will directly benefit companies in Montgomery County, particularly start up companies. A new cybersecurity investment tax credit was created. In addition, a greater financial commitment was made to the biotech tax credit which has proved a valuable incentive for investment in the County. Two years ago, the establishment of InvestMaryland allowed the State

to raise \$84 million to invest in early stage technologies. This year, the Delegation supported a number of improvements that will help allow this important program to maximize its potential.

The Delegation continues to be key proponents of environmental initiatives to improve air and water quality, both locally and in the Chesapeake Bay. New laws will require the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to construct green buildings whenever feasible, require the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to provide more notice about sewage leaks, and afford the County greater flexibility to manage storm water and restore streams to their natural condition.

In the area of consumer protection, Delegation members successfully advocated for an enhanced consumer protection provision involving aggressive predatory towing practices.

On the health care front, the Delegation provided strong support for the Maryland Health Progress Act which makes changes needed to fully implement the Federal Affordable Care Act. The new law clears the way for the State's Health Insurance Exchange to open this October, which could allow an estimated 55,000 Montgomery County residents to enroll in federally-subsidized health plans offered through the Exchange.

Important initiatives to improve public safety were also passed. For example, a new 9-1-1 surcharge on pre-paid wireless services will allow the County to move more quickly toward next generation 9-1-1 technology. Also, the enactment of critical gun control legislation will help create safer communities by imposing tough new restrictions on gun purchases, licensing, and gun safety.

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ATTACHMENTS