

The Maryland General Assembly adjourned the 2025 Legislative Session on April 7, 2025. Despite the State's difficult financial position, we had another very productive session for District 29, as I was able to obtain over **\$19 million** in State funding for local projects.

The Capital Budget included funding for several projects across St. Mary's and Calvert Counties. I am proud to share that this budget includes funding for the Pascal Crisis Stabilization Center, an inpatient mental health facility which will be located in St. Mary's County, as well as the labor and delivery area of the Family Birth Center at CalvertHealth Medical Center.

Additionally, I was able to ensure continued funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) through the budget process. The budget as introduced would have ended State funding for SMADC over the next four years, leaving our Southern Maryland farmers without the support they were promised from the tobacco settlement. With the assistance of my colleagues and support from Southern Maryland's agricultural community, we were able to fully fund SMADC in the years to come.

I was also successful in securing funding for a number of important local projects through the Legislative Bond Initiative process, including solar panels for the Second District Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, improvements to St. Mary's County Elks Lodge No. 2092, Annmarie Gardens, and expanded fuel capacity at St. Mary's County Regional Airport. Grants were also included this year for the Great Mills YMCA and to replace the doors of the historic White House at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.

***Sponsored Legislation*** – I was proud to **sponsor and pass** the below bills during this legislative session which will be presented to the Governor for his signature:

*Public Safety*

**Senate Bill 394/House Bill 674 – Criminal Law - Dismembering or Burying Human Remains With Intent to Conceal a Crime** prohibits a person from knowingly and willfully dismembering, destroying, removing, burying, disposing of, or otherwise obliterating by any means any portion of human remains with the intent to conceal a crime. A person who violates this law is guilty of a felony and can receive up to five years in prison.

*Economic Development*

**Senate Bill 544/House Bill 559 – Food Establishments - Portable Chemical Toilets** would authorize food establishments that are agritourism businesses, limited wineries, or farm breweries to comply with the requirement in State law to provide a convenient lavatory using a portable chemical toilet. Many of these businesses do not currently have the facilities required to comply with State laws for food establishments, and some of these businesses are in rural zoning areas or are on preserved farmland and therefore do not have the opportunity to build permanent restrooms. This bill will give these small business owners more flexibility in complying with the law.

**Senate Bill 363/House Bill 397 - Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation - Oyster Shucking House Loan Program** would expand the ability of the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) to provide loans under the Oyster Shucking House Loan Program.

## *Natural Resources*

**Senate Bill 335/House Bill 892 - Natural Resources - Canada Geese - Bag Limits** requires the bag limit for all Canada geese to be uniform across the State, outside of Western Maryland, during the 30-day migratory Atlantic population Canada goose hunting season for the next five years. This is a conservation measure to protect the migratory Atlantic Goose Population.

**Senate Bill 100/House Bill 857 - Natural Resources - Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours and Using a Light - Authorization** permits DNR to adopt regulations allowing a hunter who wounds a deer during legal hunting hours to pursue and kill the deer after legal hunting hours.

**Senate Bill 76/House Bill 893 - Tidal Fish Licenses - Oyster Authorizations - Administrative Penalties** protects the due process rights of commercial watermen by limiting the time that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may suspend their authorization to catch oysters for a first administrative violation under State law.

**Senate Bill 186/House Bill 446 - Natural Resources - Invasive Blue Catfish Pilot Program** establishes the Invasive Blue Catfish Pilot Program to curb the spread of the invasive blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. DNR must authorize the use of finfish trotlines south of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to the maximum extent feasible to harvest blue catfish where it would not significantly affect other fish species or cause user conflicts.

**Senate Bill 23/House Bill 425 - Natural Resources - State Boat Act – Auctioneers** exempts licensed auctioneers from having to obtain a dealer’s license in order to auction a boat in Maryland. This matches the current exemption in law for auctioneers who auction vehicles and will make it easier for Marylanders to find professionals willing to auction their boats.

***Future Legislative Agenda*** – While I am very happy to report these successful bills, unfortunately like most other legislators, I had several bills that did not pass this year. Most notably, Senate Bill 364 (Jamari’s Law), which would have increased the existing maximum penalties for felony manslaughter by vehicle or vessel, did not receive a vote in either the Senate or the House of Delegates prior to the conclusion of the legislative session. I intend to continue working with my colleagues to advance this very important legislation for our community and for the safety of all Marylanders next year.

I also intend to continue working with my colleagues in both the Senate and the House on Senate Bill 637, which would remove the requirement for certain types of boats registered under the State Boat Act, such as houseboats, to obtain wetlands permits in order to operate in Maryland.

***Local Legislation*** – In addition to these bills, I also worked to secure passage of nine bills that are specific to St. Mary’s or Calvert Counties that were requested by our local governments or communities:

### **St. Mary’s County**

Senate Bill 623 - St. Mary's County – Public Facilities Bond

House Bill 476 - St. Mary's County – Alcoholic Beverages – Class A License Quota

House Bill 480 - St. Mary’s County – County Plans – Public Sewerage Systems and Water Supply Systems

House Bill 485 - St. Mary's County – Corrections

House Bill 486 - St. Mary's County – Alcoholic Beverages – Civil Penalty for Sales Violations

House Bill 490 - St. Mary's County – Competitive Bidding – Threshold

House Bill 491 - St. Mary's County – Metropolitan Commission – Discontinuance of Service

House Bill 574 - St. Mary's County – Alcoholic Beverages Licenses – Multiple Licensing Plans

### **Calvert County**

Senate Bill 767 - Calvert County Sheriff – Deputy Sheriffs and Correctional Deputies – Collective Bargaining