

March 4, 2014
Newsletter #3

This is a very busy time in the Environmental Matters Committee. I do not think most people know what we do in Annapolis all day while we are in session. We will be extraordinarily busy the next two weeks with the “crossover” date being moved up a week to Monday, March 17,

Last week, February 24 to February 28, our Committee heard over 50 bills in Bill Hearings starting at 1:00 PM daily. Some days the hearings lasted 6 or 7 hours, followed by sub-committee meetings and voting sessions. Twelve hour days are not uncommon beginning halfway through session.

We had two voting sessions in Environmental Matters this week. We voted on 46 bills, 24 of the bills were voted “unfavorable” and nine bills were withdrawn by the sponsor. We passed 13 bills, 5 of which had amendments. Bringing the stakeholders to the table, meeting with the proponents and opponents of a bill before we vote, makes the legislation better, so there is very little time that I do not have someone in my office discussing bills. Twice this week, I ate lunch at my desk, while discussing a bill or amendments with someone sitting across from me.

On Friday mornings, we meet as the Anne Arundel County Delegation. This gives us an opportunity to invite groups and organizations to visit with us and share their issues. Friday, we heard three bills in Delegation regarding salary increases and one about Electronic Instant Bingo Machines. I was appointed to a Delegation Workgroup to discuss the three bills requesting pay raises for the State’s Attorney, the Sherriff and the Judges of the Orphans Court. Not sure where that workgroup will fit in the already tight schedule. We also reviewed our Bond Bill list, which had been prioritized by a Delegation Workgroup.

For the past several weeks the Delegation has been conducting public Bond Bill hearings during their regular weekly Delegation Meetings. What are Bond Bills? They are requests for capital project funding that an organization can apply for. Any group may request funding from the General Assembly for a capital project. Projects to be considered must be capital in nature, dealings with land and/or structures, and have a useful life of 15 years.

There are so many good causes, but only about \$1.2 million to distribute. This year’s list includes requests from 13 organizations. They are:

- HB 496, Annapolis Police Indoor Firing Range
- HB 107, 206 West Street Social Enterprise Project, Light House Shelter
- HB 984, Southern Middle School and Southern Highs School Improvements

- HB 8, 1 Martin Street Renovation
- HB 586, Hospice of the Chesapeake Renovation Phase II
- HB 627, Southern High Softball Field Improvements
- HB 1387, Calvary Food Bank
- HB 7, Chesapeake Arts Center
- HB 1514, Captain Avery Museum Window Repair and Restoration
- HB 1470, Bestgate Park
- HB 1375, Mayo Civic Association Project
- HB 1487, Camp Whippoorwill Living Shoreline Project

These projects have total of more than 2.6 Million Dollars. The next step is an appearance before the House Appropriations Committee. The Delegation works hard to find funding for all of the projects that they can. Some may funded by the County, others by Open Space grants or other programs.

My office is open full time during the Session. Nancy Crawford is my Legislative Aide, Jenn Thompson is my Community Liaison and Lisa Johnson is my Intern for the session. My contact information remains the same: pamela.beidle@house.state.md.us or 410.841.3370. Please feel free to share your thoughts and concerns with me.

It is truly an honor to serve you in the Maryland General Assembly.