

April 12, 2017

Dear Friends:

Now, as the 2017 Legislative Session comes to a close, I would like to thank you for sharing your concerns on the many issues facing us in the General Assembly. I tried to keep up-to-date on your emails and calls, and to respond to as many as possible.

Our first order of business in the 2017 Session was to uphold vital legislation passed in our previous session by overriding Govern Hogan's veto of the **Clean Energy Act**. This bill will increase the state's renewable energy goals to 25% by 2020 and, in the process, create thousands of jobs. Maryland has more than 170 solar companies and over 4,000 solar jobs paying nearly \$21 an hour.

This session, we were very successful with important environmental legislation, including two bills that I was proud to take on as lead sponsor:

- **Pollinator Habitats:** In continuing our efforts to protect bees and other pollinators, we discovered that we needed to give clearer direction to Maryland departments tasked with the responsibility to construct new pollinator-friendly habitats on state land. My bill will require that the designated habitats are free of neonicotinoids and other pesticides that are harmful to bees and other pollinators.
- **Forest Conservation:** Clarifying that local governments with planning and zoning authority may adopt forest conservation and afforestation requirements more stringent than specified in State law. It is my understanding that the City of Annapolis is already underway with new specifications.

I also sponsored a traffic safety bill, to authorize trash trucks to use amber lights to improve safety.

The November election and ominous changes at the Federal level made it urgent to focus on several new and pressing issues. Under my leadership as Chair of the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, the Legislature passed legislation to reassert and protect our rights and Maryland values. Among the most important were:

- **The Maryland Defense Act:** The General Assembly exercised its right to empower Attorney General Brian Frosh to go to court to protect Maryland from Federal overreach and unconstitutional actions by the Federal government. As The Baltimore Sun noted, “We elect attorneys general to represent our interests in court. We need to give him the power to do that.”
- **To protect the Chesapeake Bay:** The General Assembly passed joint resolutions to call upon the Governor and our Representative in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to oppose President Trump’s budget proposal to zero-out all \$73 million of the EPA’s budget to clean up the Chesapeake Bay.
- **To protect Maryland health care:** We passed Joint Resolutions asking Gov. Hogan and our Congressional Delegation to join us in opposition to the elimination of health care coverage for 433,000 Marylanders, which Affordable would be at risk if the Affordable Care Act were to be repealed.
- **Repealing calls for a Constitutional Convention:** The Maryland General Assembly had five longstanding calls for a constitutional convention, some dating back to 1939. This year we repealed all of them. There is just too much uncertainty of the outcome of such a convention. The danger of a convention tinkering with our Constitutional rights at this time was reason enough to repeal all past calls. The tried-and-true way of amending the Constitution remains an option.

The Environment and Transportation Committee, where I serve in a leadership role, had a very successful Session. I am a proud co-sponsor of the following bills which have been sent to the Governor. I urge him to sign them all and not veto any.

- **Foreclosure Protection:** The House passed a series of bills to help communities with high foreclosure rates, such as Prince George’s county, continue to recover. These bills will help communities deal with vacant and abandoned properties, and help resolve issues more quickly.
- **Fracking Banned on Maryland:** The General Assembly passed and the Governor signed House Bill 1325, an outright ban on fracking in Maryland. This bipartisan legislation will protect public health and drinking water across the State. We are pleased the Senate and Governor Hogan followed the House’s lead to enact this critical ban.

- **Oyster Sanctuaries Protected:** This legislation protects existing oyster recovery investments, gives sanctuaries additional time to grow, and makes sure that decisions related to oyster harvesting are guided by science. Oysters are the natural filters of the Chesapeake Bay. We need to continue to support efforts to help their population rebound for a cleaner Bay.
- **Keep Antibiotics Effective.** We passed a bill to ban routine use of antibiotics in agriculture. The unnecessary use of antibiotics is a major contributor to antibiotics resistance, a growing public health menace.

## Important to Prince George's County

- **Prince George's Regional Medical Center:** The Legislature stopped Gov. Hogan from cutting transitional funding for our new Prince George's Regional Medical Center. We restored the money in this year's budget and passed new legislation mandating an additional \$100 million in operating money over the next ten years to support transition to the new facility. And we restored the ongoing State payments for construction.
- **School Funding:** The legislature provided \$6.4 billion Statewide for public K-12 systems, more than \$1 Billion of that is for Prince George's County Schools. The legislature also budgeted \$280 million of regular school construction funding, plus an additional \$60 million for school systems with increasing enrollment and a high number of relocatable classrooms such as Prince George's County Public Schools.

**Bond Bills in District 22:** We received a total of \$240,000 for qualifying non-profits throughout the District.

## Other Important issues

- **Earned Sick Leave:** House Bill 1, the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act, will allow over 693,000 Marylanders to no longer make an impossible choice: go to work sick or send an ill child to school, or stay home and sacrifice much needed income – or worse, possibly lose his or her job. Under the bill, employees will be able to earn up to 5 days of sick leave. The bill exempts seasonal businesses and employers that already offers comparable benefits.

# Anne Healey

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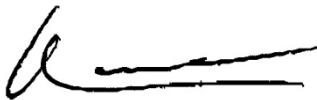
- **Protect Our Schools:** The General Assembly passed and overrode Governor Hogan's veto of the Protect Our Schools Act. This bill implements the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act, while giving the State Board of Education discretion on most details. The bill prohibits

the State Board from making standardized test results the only assessment of school progress. It also blocks privatization of public schools.

We had a very challenging but productive Session. There will always be new challenges, and with your help and support, we will face them together. I encourage you to stay in touch with me, and I will do my best for you and everyone in our fine state.

**Additional information and details may be found on the Maryland General Assembly website: [mgaleg.maryland.gov](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov)**

Sincerely,



Anne Healey