



April 20, 2015

The Honorable Larry J. Hogan, Jr.  
Governor of Maryland  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

We write to alert you of the important status that state school funding plays in the rapidly approaching county budget process, and to urge you to reach a decision quickly regarding full funding of school funding envisioned under state laws, including the Geographic Cost of Education Index, or GCEI. We hope that you will place this funding in its proper context alongside other school funding and within the state's budget plan, and approve its release for the coming year.

The GCEI was part of the "Bridge to Excellence" legislation arising from the Thornton Commission, making a commitment to transform state support for schools to reach important adequacy and equity goals. Though this element was rendered discretionary, it should not be viewed as a stand-alone notion – its provisions were embedded within that broad-based legislation. With the state budget plan still making laudable gains toward structural balance, and the capacity in the FY 2016 budget to afford these distributions, counties encourage you to include full funding for GCEI in your final spending plan for the year ahead.

We also urge you to make this decision promptly. County governments are already amidst their own budget processes, concluding their deliberations as soon as mid-May. For the thirteen jurisdictions with GCEI funds still pending, the state would be casting a cloud of uncertainty over their own budgeting priorities, with enormous pressure on local tax rates as school systems would surely seek to offset lost funding through local resources. School systems still facing uncertainty after a locally-passed budget would be faced with personnel and facility decisions at the outset of the fiscal year. For all parties, a contingent budget would be a disservice to our schools' and students' best interests.

We are encouraged by your recent statements regarding the overall fiscal plan, and hope in that context you will recognize the importance of these school funds. We also remain eager to work with you as you continue to pursue your policy priorities in the years ahead, and to deliver effective and responsive service to our residents and taxpayers.

Regards,



Isiah Leggett  
County Executive, Montgomery County  
President, MACo



John Barr  
Commissioner, Washington County  
First Vice President, MACo



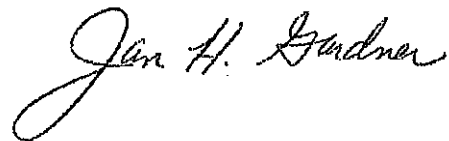
Tari Moore  
County Executive, Cecil County  
Second Vice President, MACo



Kevin Kamenetz  
County Executive, Baltimore County  
Secretary, MACo



Jerry Walker  
Council Chair, Anne Arundel County  
Treasurer, MACo



Jan Gardner  
County Executive, Frederick County  
Past President, MACo

CC: Ms. Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Maryland Office of the Governor  
Mr. Joseph Getty, Chief Legislative Officer, Maryland Office of the Governor  
The Honorable Michael Bush, Speaker of the House, Maryland House of Delegates  
The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, President, Maryland State Senate