



ENOCH PRATT  
*free* LIBRARY

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
SB 501 Libraries - Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program - Established  
March 1, 2023  
Support**

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support **SB 501 Libraries – Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Grant Program**. This legislation would significantly improve the ability of public library systems across the state as they attempt to address library building infrastructure needs in their subdivisions.

Upon completion of current projects through FY23, the State's investment of \$82,325,000 will have leveraged more than \$370,000,000 in construction dollars at the local level and ensured that our library buildings remain vibrant, sustainable, and highly responsive to our communities who rely on them.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library has received over \$4.6 million in State support which leveraged another \$15 million in local funding from Baltimore City to support renovations at our Canton, Edmondson, Hampden, Reisterstown, and Waverly branches. The Canton branch was one of the original branches built by Mr. Pratt in the late 1800's and the Hampden branch opened more than 100 years ago. They are examples of historic buildings that can be restored and made functional for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The other branches are more than 50 years old and needed significant improvement to address building code and functional needs. All of the communities affected love and use their libraries and are pleased with the improvements. Most important is how we were able to improve on service delivery that promotes lifelong learning, workforce development, and other needs in the community.

Libraries are important hubs in the community helping to stabilize neighborhoods and provide a world of opportunities to users. Access to non-traditional services like social work, pro-bono legal services, healthcare, and more happen in public libraries and to continue that access needs modern up to date library buildings which this legislation would make possible.

I respectfully request that you give SB 501 a favorable report and thank you very much for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely

Gordon E. Krabbe  
Chief Operating Officer