



2024 Legislative Session Begins

Dear Friend,

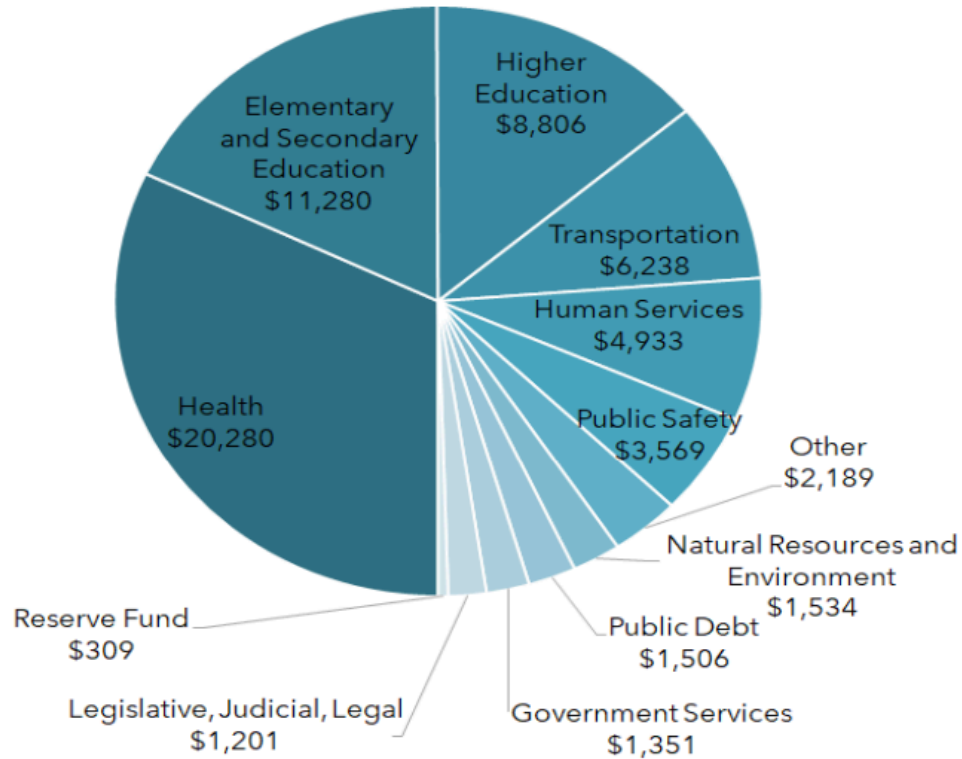
January 10th marked the first day of the 446th Session of the Maryland General Assembly. It is an honor to return to Annapolis to represent you in the Maryland State Senate. This Session begins my second year as Chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (Committee), which reviews legislation not only related to education, energy, and environmental policy, but also to election law, ethics, agriculture, business occupations, and natural resources. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Committee as we discuss and formulate public policy within these important subject areas.



Please take a moment to read the information below and, as always, do not hesitate to contact me with your comments, questions, or concerns at:

Brian.Feldman@senate.state.md.us.

Governor Moore’s Proposed Budget: Fiscal Year 2025



Total Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025

Source: [Maryland Budget Highlights, Fiscal 2025](#)

Expenditure amounts in millions

Each year, as required by the Maryland Constitution, the State must pass a balanced budget by the conclusion of the legislative session. Last week, Governor Moore presented a proposed budget of \$63.1 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. The budget addresses some of the current fiscal challenges that Maryland faces by reducing the structural deficit by 34% for FY2025, while also making significant investments in climate pollution reduction programs, housing, and education – without raising taxes.

The proposed budget allocates \$90 million to support the implementation of the State's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan. The plan, released in December 2023, outlines policy actions required to achieve our current climate goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Additionally, a 66% increase in funding for priority housing and community development projects will result in \$115 million dedicated to making affordable and quality housing more accessible in Maryland.

To support the Blueprint for Maryland's Future—legislation that passed in 2021 to improve all aspects of K-12 education in Maryland—the budget provides \$9.2 billion dollars in operating funds for public schools and an additional \$906 million for school construction.

Further, the budget maintains a Rainy Day Fund balance of 9.4% of General Fund revenues, amounting to \$2.34 billion, to protect against potential economic or environmental uncertainties.

As of March 2023, Maryland continues to maintain its coveted AAA bond rating. Determined by S&P Global Ratings, Moody's Investor Service, and Fitch Ratings, this rating reflects decades of balanced financial management by the State and will allow us to remain competitive and retain flexibility in our budgeting going forward.

Feldman Legislation

Below is a preview of some of the bills that I will be introducing this Session.

Energy and the Environment

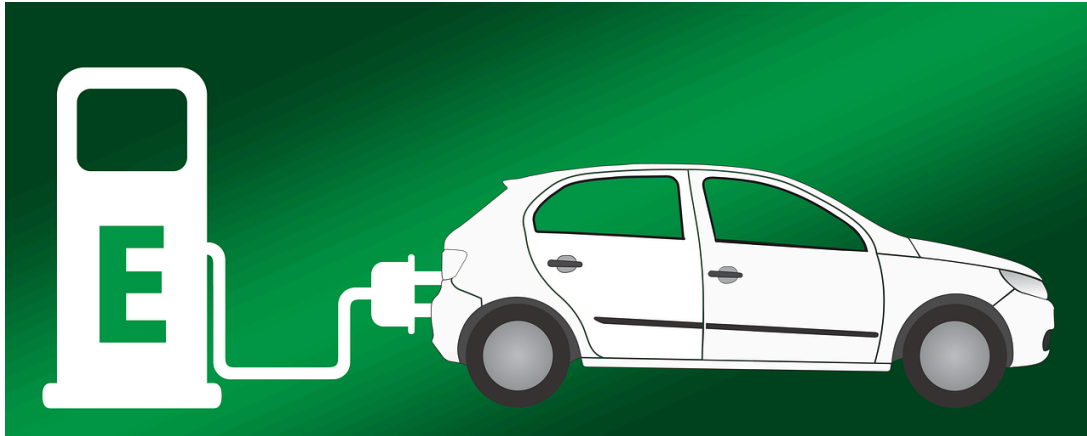
EmPOWER

In 2008, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act to meet growing demands for electricity by promoting energy efficiency. This not only helped maintain the reliability of our energy grid, but it has also saved ratepayers \$9.2 billion over the last 15 years.

As Maryland's energy priorities have evolved in response to the climate crisis, meetings have been held by utilities, environmental leaders, consumer protection advocates, and the Public Service Commission to reframe the central goal of Maryland EmPOWER from more efficient energy consumption to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We have crafted—and I have introduced—legislation that would require electric and gas companies to develop and implement programs to promote energy efficiency and

conservation measures. This will work to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas and reach our goal of 60% emission reductions by 2031 from 2006 levels. The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development would provide similar programs for low-income households.

Multifamily Residential Buildings - Electric Vehicles



Maryland is moving toward a greater use of electric vehicles (EVs) to meet the State’s climate goals. But while the majority of EV owners charge their vehicles at home, the State lacks the proper infrastructure to support this continual transition. Last year, I sponsored legislation that requires all new construction of single-family detached homes, duplexes, and townhouses with garages, carports, and driveways to include a parking space with an outlet for charging. Unfortunately, multifamily residential buildings were excluded from last year’s bill. This Session, I am introducing legislation titled **EV Parking For Multifamily Residential Buildings**, which will include multifamily residential buildings—ensuring that more Marylanders will have access to charging stations at home.

Elections

Currently, our State Constitution directs that a gubernatorial candidate must select a lieutenant governor before the primary election is held and a winner determined. Maryland is one of only seven (7) states in the nation to have such a requirement. This often deters prospective candidates from running for lieutenant governor. Therefore, I am sponsoring **Senate Bill 327 - Election Law - Deadline for Selection of Lieutenant Governor**, which would allow Marylanders to vote in the next general election to amend the State Constitution and provide that a gubernatorial candidate may select a running mate within 21 days after winning the primary election. This bi-partisan amendment would transition Maryland to a

gubernatorial election format similar to the federal model used for selecting the vice president and one that I believe will result in the strongest group of potential candidates.

Transportation

Maryland Metro Funding Act of 2024

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the organization that operates the Metro and other public transit in the Washington metropolitan area, provides essential transportation for our State's workforce and is critical to our region's economy. It also provides a sustainable mode of travel for many Marylanders. However, WMATA currently faces a significant budget shortfall, which may result in station closures, longer wait times, and serious disruptions in service.



Throughout my tenure in the General Assembly, I have consistently worked to support WMATA and establish a consistent funding source. This year, I am teaming up with Senator Malcolm Augustine and Delegate Marc Korman to sponsor Senate Bill 126/House Bill 198 – Transportation – WMATA Operating Assistance – Alteration. This bill temporarily pauses, until FY2026, the requirement that the Secretary of Transportation withhold a portion of the State's annual operating grant to WMATA. Additionally, we are collaborating with our colleagues on the D.C. Council and in the Virginia General Assembly to ensure that our regional partners will be allocating funds to pay their share of the cost.

As always, thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you in Annapolis. I value your feedback and encourage you to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns at Brian.Feldman@senate.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian".