



Jolene Ivey
Chair
Council District 5

"Serving the People of Prince George's County!"

February 20, 2024

Honorable Westly W.O. Moore
Maryland Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1924

Honorable William C. Ferguson, IV
Senate President
State House – H-107
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1924

Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House
State House – H-101
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1924

Re: **2024 Prince George's County Council General Assembly Legislative Priorities**

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Unity. That has been Prince George's County Council's theme since I became Chair in December 2023, and I believe *Unity* will bring us through this fiscally challenging time as we move through this 2024 Legislative Session. As we continue to face the fiscal challenges that will encompass the 2024 Session of the Maryland General Assembly and likely for the subsequent sessions, we, the Prince George's County Council, are resolute to continue collaborative efforts to further our common goals. As we are just about halfway through the 2024 General Assembly Session, the Council wants to inform you in writing what the priorities are during this Session and year. We must secure critical State funding necessary for the Education Blueprint, Relocation of the FBI Headquarters to Prince George's County, Blue Line Corridor, Modernizing Local Civil Fines Structure, Route 210 Speed Monitoring Systems, and other Transportation Priorities.

We have a budget of \$5 billion, with sixty percent dedicated to education and twenty percent for public safety. That leaves us with twenty percent for our roads, health care, social services, and more. We simply can't stretch our resources any thinner. In addition to finding ways to support our essential programs outside of public safety and education, we have to find ways to deter bad actors from continuing to illegally dump trash, hold onto vacant dilapidated houses, and operate illegal pro-profit businesses, causing nuisances within our neighborhoods.

Prince George's County continues to reign as a primary economic engine in our State, and we need your help to support ongoing initiatives that are critical for our future. If we are unified in our commitment to improving affordable housing, procuring business development, and solving our public safety challenges, we will enhance the quality of life for all Prince George's County residents. Thank you in advance for the State's commitment to strengthening Prince George's County's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jolene Ivey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jolene Ivey, Chair
Prince George's County Council

Enclosure

cc: Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Prince George's Senate Delegation Members
Prince George's House Delegation Members
Prince George's County Council Members
Jennifer Jenkins, Council Administrator
Colette Gresham, Acting Deputy Council Administrator

Prince George's County Council's 2024 Legislative Priorities

Modernize Local Civil Fines Structure – Increasing civil fines in Maryland would enable local governments to structure penalties high enough to deter violators. With the legislator's support of HB 501/SB 522, local governments could fine property owners with dilapidated housing, homeowners who conduct illegal “for profit” house parties, and violators who illegally dump boats and other large items on our streets. Since the 1990s, counties have been unable to issue civil fines more than \$1,000. This amount no longer is sufficient to be a deterrent. We urge legislators to support HB 501/SB 522, which will increase civil penalties and allow Counties and their Municipalities to discourage bad actors.

Kirwan Funding – To achieve adequate and equitable funding for the County's school system, we are encouraged that the FY 2025 budget fully funded Blueprint for Maryland's Future programs. We fully support Kirwan's core tenets, including early childhood education, college readiness, diverse high-quality teachers, and more student resources. However, State-mandated funding requirements burden our County's budget during this tight budget cycle. For this reason, the County Council supports HB 398 Prince George's County – Sales and Use Tax on Telecommunication Services – Use of Revenue and HB 396 Prince George's County – Sales and Use Tax on Energy and Fuel – Use of Revenue. Removing mandated funding requirements for local governments will enable them to spend monies on other underfunded local initiatives.

Expediting the Relocation of FBI Headquarters to Prince George's County – The County supports any measures that pressure Federal officials to expedite the FBI relocation to Greenbelt. Since the General Services Administration selected Greenbelt as the future home of the FBI, Virginia lawmakers have successfully pressured federal officials to investigate the selection process. As FBI officials continue to remain in a decayed D.C. headquarters, it becomes a threat to America's national security. Prince George's County needs the State's support to send letters to federal officials that support relocating the FBI to Greenbelt.

Other Transportation Priorities – Prince George's County continues to advance priorities for a comprehensive transportation network that will strengthen the State. The County supports projects that further safe system transportation approaches like Vision Zero Prince George's, the Purple Line development, the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project, and Zero Emission Fleet. This year, Prince George's County will launch the Prince George's County Transit Transformation. This new approach will focus on transit performance, reliability, and safety. For this new bus program to succeed, we will need active coordination and partnership from the State. More funding is necessary for the Locally Operated Transit System (LOTS) programmed for Prince George's County. The County has leveraged federal earmarks and a \$25 million low-no emissions grant to rehabilitate the existing facility, initiate a study for a new facility, and continue the transition to zero-emission buses. Enhanced funding is critical to meet existing needs and enable future growth while addressing new efficiencies, technologies, and climate change. Any reduction to LOTS funding could hinder the County's sustainable

initiatives. Over the past few years, transit systems have seen a reduction in federal funding. To support current and future initiatives, such as the Better Bus initiative network redesign, sustained funding for WMATA is critical for the County and capitol region. Increased focus on Transit Oriented Development through the Joint Development Process is critical for WMATA and the County.

Blue Line Corridor – The County appreciates the appropriation of State funding towards improvements in local infrastructure. The Blue Line Corridor is integral for Prince George's County to develop homes, generate retail spaces, and offices along existing *Metro* stations. To ensure timely completion of the Blue Line Corridor project in downtown Largo, \$16,646,753 is needed for construction and design cost. Continuing to fund Blue Line Corridor investment will decrease congestion from D.C. to Prince George's County Maryland while reducing our County and regions environmental footprint. Still, ensuring a smooth and efficient system for delivery of the Central Ave (MD 214) Complete Streets and creating bike lanes and walking paths are critical infrastructure improvements that need State support. Building on previous State investments along this corridor will enhance our ability to maximize access from Central Ave to the capitol region.

Speed Monitoring Systems on Maryland Route 210 – Bad actors have not been deterred from driving at dangerous speeds on Route 210 (Indian Head Highway). This bill increases civil penalties for violations recorded by speed monitoring systems on Maryland Route 210 in Prince George's County that are second or subsequent violations or that involve exceeding the maximum speed limit by certain amounts. Currently, unless the driver of the motor vehicle received a citation from a police officer at the time of the violation, the driver of a motor vehicle is subject to a civil penalty that may not exceed \$40 if a speed monitoring system records the motor vehicle. Clearly this fine must increase in order to get the attention of irresponsible drivers.