

My Administration has made a concerted effort to develop a five-year capital improvement program that is based on the State's Debt Affordability criteria for each of the five years of the program. Projects funded for design in one year can now reasonably expect construction funding to be appropriated when design work is complete. This has eliminated the practice of providing a level of design appropriations in one year that would result in a level of construction activity in the following years in excess of the State's Debt Affordability limits.

The five year capital improvement plan is a comprehensive program to address the capital needs of the State, and is prepared only after a careful review of all potential projects. Individual project decisions made outside of this process compromise the integrity of the overall program. By adding preliminary design funds to the General Construction Loan of 1988 for the Plant Sciences Building at the University of Maryland College Park campus, the General Assembly has provided for a relatively small portion of the project's estimated \$33,500,000 cost. Given higher priorities of the University, it is unlikely that construction funding for this project would be available in the General Construction Loan before fiscal year 1993. It serves no purpose to provide design funds at this time for a project that will not have construction funding available for another four or five years. One real possibility is that the design drawings would become obsolete in the interim.

The prospect of federal funding for this project is too remote to justify the expenditure of these funds.

I am very aware of the significant capital facility needs throughout the State. I know that within the higher education community in particular, there is much unmet need. In many cases, facilities at the University of Maryland College Park lag badly behind facilities in other major research universities. Other institutions have similar complaints. But, given the constraints of debt affordability, we cannot responsibly commit these design funds to a project that will not receive construction funding in the next few years. We will, however, seriously pursue other funding alternatives which may allow us to address this and other important unmet capital needs.

Sincerely,
William Donald Schaefer
Governor