

\$206,000 less than anticipated; Allegany County would lose \$149,000; Baltimore County would lose \$274,000; and Montgomery County would lose \$914,000. I am concerned that, given the lateness of the request from the Public School Construction Program to codify a formula that would have a negative impact on some school systems, the change occurred without sufficient notice to the jurisdictions that the amounts they had planned to receive for the upcoming fiscal year would be reduced.

My second concern is based on the practical realities of how this Program was created. As outlined above, the Aging Schools Program is one of many programs that were enhanced or created to respond to unique, specific needs of jurisdictions across the State. While this may be an imperfect method of making funding decisions, jurisdictions to which this program is important supported programs of importance to other jurisdictions with the expectation that the funds would be provided at the levels that were specifically enacted into law. This was a reasonable expectation, given the creation of the Program in 1997, the enhancement of the Program in 1998 and the extension of the Program in 2001 and 2002 at the codified levels. While I understand the desire of proponents of House Bill 937 to update the Aging Schools Program data, the reduction of the amounts allocated through this Program now is understandably troubling to some jurisdictions.

Fortunately, the decision to veto House Bill 937 will have no impact on the Aging Schools Program. The Program is fully funded at \$10.4 million in fiscal year 2003 and local school districts will receive their anticipated amounts. The Program will continue to exist in fiscal year 2004 because of the sunset extension in Chapter 288 of 2002. Further, the veto will not jeopardize the work of a task force to examine school construction issues. Section 5 of Chapter 288 of 2002 creates a Task Force to Study Public School Facilities. Part of the charge to the Task Force is to consider whether the Aging Schools Program should be continued as a permanent program. The Task Force would be an appropriate forum to address the allocation issues raised in House Bill 937.

The Task Force language in Chapter 288 of 2002 is not exactly the same as the language used in House Bill 937. Most importantly, Chapter 288 of 2002 does not include a charge to the Task Force to examine the issue that was originally of concern to Delegate Busch, the sponsor of House Bill 937, and the bill's co-sponsor, Delegate David D. Rudolph - the allocation of school construction funding to schools with a significant population of children who are eligible for free and reduced price meals. In deference to the sponsors of House Bill 937, I respectfully request that the Task Force consider this issue and the other issues outlined in House Bill 937 as part of its work.

For the above reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 937.

Sincerely,  
Parris N. Glendening  
Governor

**House Bill No. 937**

AN ACT concerning

**Education - ~~Public School Construction~~ State Share for Schools with**