

## RESOLUTION 2015-12

### CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

#### A RESOLUTION URGING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE GOVERNOR TO RESTORE STATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**WHEREAS**, state funding support for public libraries has been dramatically reduced since the start of the Great Recession; and

**WHEREAS**, during these years, the demands on our public libraries for the services they provide have increased; not diminished; and

**WHEREAS**, just since fiscal 2007-08, state funding for library services in the Commonwealth has been slashed by some 33 percent, or approximately \$30 million annually; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cumberland County Library System -- which includes seven libraries and one branch and which has been identified as the busiest library system in the state -- has been forced, as a result of these state funding cuts, to reduce services and deplete budgetary reserves in an effort to maintain services for an expanding number of library patrons; and

**WHEREAS**, the county's tax support for its public libraries and county library system has increased markedly over the past 29 years -- since the 1986 voter-approved inception of a special countywide library property tax, the doubling of that levy in 2003 by a prior Board of Commissioners, and natural growth -- by 1,176 percent from \$253,247 in 1986 to \$3,230,794 in the last year; and

**WHEREAS**, while county library funding has grown substantially, state support for Cumberland County's public libraries has diminished by a total of 41 percent in just the past seven years, or \$720,833 each year, with the state providing less than one dollar for every four dollars of public taxpayer support for Cumberland County's public libraries (\$1,039,331 versus \$3,230,794); and

**WHEREAS**, these state funding cuts, which cumulatively total \$4,376,587 since 2008, are particularly egregious considering that Cumberland County's libraries must comply with a wide array of state regulations and mandates as well as provide library service at no charge for out-of-county residents who comprise at least 16 percent of the patrons at our county's libraries; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor's budget calls for additional support for education but, inexplicably, fails to adequately fund public libraries, which are a part of the education budget, and, more critically, serve as year-round educational institutions that nurture young minds and promote learning and literacy for young and old alike.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners does hereby respectfully request that, in consideration of all priorities of the 2015-16 state budget, the General Assembly and the Governor provide for a restoration of education funding for the state's vitally

important community-based public libraries, including full restoration of funds for the Statewide Library Card Reimbursement Program (increase the Library Access line item from \$3,071,000 to \$7,386,000 or \$4,315,000 more) and a percentage state match for every public dollar raised locally for our county's libraries; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to each member of Cumberland County's delegation to the state Senate and House, and to his Excellency the Governor, the Secretary of Education, and to the Speaker of the House and President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Senate and House majority and minority leaders, the Senate and House majority and minority appropriations committee chairs, and the Senate and House majority and minority education committee chairs.

**ADOPTED THIS 26<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2015**

ATTEST:



Lawrence Thomas, Chief Clerk

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Barbara B. Cross, Chairman



Jim Hertzler, Vice-Chairman



Gary Eichelberger, Secretary