



**Special Appropriation to the County Government's FY20 Operating Budget,
Department of Finance - \$5,000,000 for Economic Development Fund,
Public Health Emergency Grant Program (*Restaurant and Retail Storefront Establishments*)**

April 21, 2020

Position: SUPPORT

The *Restaurant Association of Maryland* supports this Special Appropriation of \$5 million to the Public Health Emergency Grant Program specifically for local restaurant or retail storefront establishments.

Restaurants provide an essential service and are the backbone of every community. We are dedicated to our employees by offering first jobs and careers with advancement opportunities, dedicated to our customers by providing exceptional dining options and service, and dedicated to our community by supporting local charities, sports teams and events. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, there were over 1,800 restaurants in Montgomery County with over 32,000 employees.

As has been widely reported, the COVID-19 related loss of business has been devastating to the restaurant industry. Although many of our restaurants continue to offer carry-out, delivery and drive-thru service, such limited sales are not nearly enough to sustain our businesses. Given the significant decrease in cash flow, restaurant businesses need significant help in order to pay their debts, rent, utilities and other financial obligations. While some federal assistance is available through the CARES Act, many restaurant businesses need immediate supplemental assistance to survive this unprecedented pandemic and loss of revenue.

For these reasons, we strongly support this Special Appropriation. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Melvin R. Thompson
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy