

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

June 21, 2011

The Lorraine Sheehan Alcohol Tax Coalition
C/O Vincent DeMarco
2600 St Paul Street
Baltimore, MD. 21218

Dear Coalition Members:

Congratulations to you and your entire coalition for your effective advocacy on behalf of the alcohol sales tax legislation this past session. The additional revenues will enable us to make important investments now and in the future, and have significant public health benefits in lives saved and reduced underage drinking and alcohol abuse. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you during the session to hear your views and perspectives on how Maryland might best allocate the new revenues both this year and going forward. The memorandum you provided in that regard was very helpful.

The revenue generated by the bill will be used this coming year to address multiple needs. Like you, I am pleased that some will reduce the waiting list for people with developmental disabilities, with much of the balance used to support public education. I have also included in the supplemental budget an additional \$15 million for community mental health services.

With respect to future alcohol tax revenues, we share the same goal to address the broader spectrum of health and community services needs identified in the original Lorraine Sheehan Act. I fully support the goal of facilitating effective and efficient investments in Medicaid, programs for people with developmental disabilities and mental health needs, substance abuse treatment and prevention, and health care workforce development. I will work with you and other stakeholders to ensure that to the extent possible, this goal remains front and center as we grapple with the difficult process of fulfilling our obligation to balance the State's budget while protecting these and other critically important priorities. We must continue to safeguard and improve our ability to care for those most vulnerable among us, and to protect and invest in the State we want our children to inherit.

Thank you again for all the work you do day in and day out to save lives and improve the health and well-being of all Marylanders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin O'Malley".

Governor