

## **Gazette**

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# **Leggett defends Silver Spring Live Nation project**

Executive writes Senate to save funding for 30,000-square foot music hall  
by Sean R. Sedam | Staff Writer

ANNAPOLIS—Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett has written to the chairman of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee defending the Live Nation project proposed for downtown Silver Spring.

The update on the project's status is "based on my understanding that the Budget and Taxation Committee is considering deauthorizing the state funds," Leggett (D) wrote in an April 1 letter to Chairman Ulysses Currie (D-Dist. 25) of District Heights.

The state aid was approved in a \$2 million bond bill for fiscal 2008. Last year, Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) included another \$2 million for the project in his fiscal 2009 construction budget.

County officials hope to break ground next year on the 30,000 square feet. Fillmore music hall, slated for the site of the former J.C. Penney building on Colesville Road in downtown Silver Spring.

In the letter, Leggett details the project's "steady progress" saying that the design phase is underway.

On March 4, the Board of Public Works certified that the county had funds to match the \$4 million in state aid approved for the project, Leggett wrote.

In January 2008, the county signed a lease with Live Nation, which will operate the venue.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Development Review Committee reviewed the project last week and the County Council has approved zoning text and subdivision regulation

amendments for the property.

A land conveyance agreement with Lee Development Group, who is donating the land, "has been largely negotiated," Leggett said.

The agreement is contingent upon giving the Lee group the development rights for a yet-to-be named project on land adjacent to the music hall.

The House Appropriations Committee this year reviewed state-bonded projects where state dollars had gone unspent over several years due to the inability of the recipient to come up with matching funds for the project or other snafus.

It is uncommon for the legislature to deauthorize the funding for projects that have been approved in recent years.

Sen. James E. DeGrange (D-Dist. 32) of Glen Burnie, the chairman of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee's capital budget subcommittee, has expressed reservations about the project.

"The County very much appreciates the state's commitment to this project, which will result in a return on the state's investment of nearly 10 percent," Leggett wrote.