

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon
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MEDIA RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: November 24, 2020****Contact: Zach Rich, Freeholder**Zach.rich@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Bateman Bill Providing Nearly \$1 million For Hunterdon Library Construction Signed Into Law

Senator Kip Bateman's legislation that appropriates funds from the New Jersey Library Construction Fund, including \$980,837 to the Hunterdon County Library (A-4942/S-3716), was signed into law by the Governor on November 20th, Hunterdon County Freeholder Zach Rich has reported.

Freeholder Rich, the Board's liaison to the Hunterdon County Library Commission, reported, "We are advised that only 38 of the 130 applications by libraries statewide were selected for the funding. Congratulations to the Library Commission and Library Director James Keehbler and his staff for their work in gaining inclusion on the funding list."

Senator Bateman, who represents the Hunterdon County towns of Flemington, Raritan Township, Readington, Stockton, and Delaware Township, stated, "Public libraries are the cornerstones of communities across our state. This is an investment in the towns, cities and counties that will help educate children, train workers for new careers, provide crucial access to technology, and provide patrons with the opportunity to enjoy temporary respite within the pages of a good book."

The Library Construction referendum was approved by New Jersey voters in 2017 and provides grants for the construction, reconstruction, development, extension, improvement, and furnishing of New Jersey public libraries.

The Hunterdon County library improvement project, at the Main Library in Raritan Township, will include adding needed public meeting rooms, a technology-oriented training lab/makers space, small group studies and a designated quiet study area, and the installation of LED energy efficient lighting, without increasing the building's footprint.

Library Director James Keehbler said, "We are excited to have this opportunity to make improvements to our Headquarters Library to benefit our residents. Our grant proposal was guided by the extensive feedback collected from community focus groups and a public survey.

The improvements will enable the Library to follow through on the goals of the recently released Strategic Plan to be a welcoming and engaging center for the community."



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The project's estimated cost is \$1.94 million which includes the \$980,000 state grant and a \$340,000 philanthropic donation to the Library. The county has provided the balance of the funding through capital ordinances approved over the past two years.