



Governor Ruth Ann Minner



January 29, 2004

To Members of the 142nd General Assembly and to all Delawareans:

In compliance with 29 Del. C. Section 6335 (a), I am respectfully submitting for your consideration the Fiscal Year 2005 Governor's Policy Overview and Budget for the State of Delaware. It is a balanced budget that is fiscally responsible, addresses critical state services and makes great strides in achieving the goals to which this Administration is firmly committed.

Thanks to the bipartisan effort of the General Assembly—along with the dedication of hardworking state employees—Delaware weathered a national economic downturn better than most states. Delaware has been recognized nationally for making tough choices to cut our budgets and live within our means as well as protecting core state government services. For Fiscal Year 2005, we must continue to exercise fiscal restraint. We must stay the course: limit state expenditures without negatively impacting services, find innovative ways to make government more efficient and do more with less. The proposed Fiscal Year 2005 operating budget totals \$2,561.0 million.

As we see the beginning of a forecasted economic recovery take hold in Delaware, it is critical that we target additional resources to strengthening our economic base and improving the education of our children and the health of our citizens. Investing in the Minner-Carney Administration's proposed economic development package will strengthen and diversify Delaware's economy by identifying the successes of the future and laying the groundwork now to realize these goals. Completing my initiative to place reading resource teachers in every elementary school—along with providing more classroom technology and educator training—will help better prepare children for academics and for life. Funding the Administration's recommendations addressing the root causes, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer will enable us to reduce the incidence and mortality of this serious disease.

This budget enables us to address the goals to which this Administration is committed: improving our schools; protecting the environment and making Delaware more livable; making families healthy, safe and self-sufficient; attracting and retaining quality jobs; and managing state government well.

As Governor, my pledge is to ensure that essential services are provided to all Delawareans in the most efficient manner possible. This budget is in keeping with the tradition of fiscal responsibility that Delaware has maintained for decades. Please join me in supporting this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Ruth Ann Minner
Governor