



**BILL NO.:** House Bill 1536

**TITLE:** Junk Dealers and Scrap Metal Processors – Required Records and Reporting

**POSITION:** **SUPPORT**

**DATE:** March 23, 2010

**COMMITTEE:** Economic Matters

**CONTACT:** Andrea Mansfield

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1536. This bill would require much needed additional record keeping and reporting requirements for junk and scrap metal dealers. The bill is designed to target the rampant theft and vandalism motivated by cash payments for recovered metal objects. Cooling this market by better oversight of the outlets for stolen property would benefit citizens, businesses, and local government everywhere.

Maryland is facing a disturbing upward trend in property crimes and theft, tracing back to the availability of “easy money” for junk and scrap metal. Homeowners, businesses, and public buildings have suffered theft of various metal objects, only to see them resurface at area scrap metal dealers, bought from essentially anonymous sources. HB 1536 would create a bolstered record-keeping and reporting requirement for these dealers, ensuring that a “no questions asked” policy is unacceptable, and reducing the existing incentives for individuals to steal and vandalize.

HB 1536 would create a state requirement as a “floor” to avoid the situation where one county’s regulations merely result in these undesirable transactions moving to another county. At the same time, the bill would allow a county to enact its own regulations, stricter than the state’s, to deal with its own specific problems. HB 1536 would also require a good faith description of the item’s use, business to business reporting, a daily “hold” provision, a photograph of the item, and a “hold” period of up to a year for the suspicion of stolen items. All of these provisions are essential for law enforcement to effectively investigate these crimes.

HB 1536 would reduce “easy money” incentives for scrap metal cash payments that are driving rampant theft and vandalism throughout Maryland. For this reason, MACo **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1536, and urges a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on the bill.