



2017 Legislative Initiatives

1. Re-invest In Local Roads, Bridges, and Infrastructure – Recession-driven cost shifts have left local roadways lacking proper maintenance, bridges in dire need, and other public infrastructure neglected. Re-investing in infrastructure – a call being heard at every level of government – is good for Maryland jobs, business attractiveness, and quality of life across the state. Meanwhile, funding for school maintenance, water delivery systems, and public safety centers all lack predictable centralized funding commitments. MACo calls on state leaders to take action in 2017:

- Approve meaningful new FY 2018 funding for restoring Highway User Revenues – using the fair, statewide formula used for decades
- Enact a phased-in restoration of the historic 30% local share of state transportation revenues – enhancing safety and road quality for motorists everywhere
- Document and assess the state of public infrastructure across Maryland – assessing the needs and reliable revenue sources targeted for each area of service

2. Strong and Smart State Funding for School Construction – The State’s commitment to school construction funding needs to remain strong and smart – to best serve the modern needs of our schoolchildren, educators, and communities. Strong state funding will recognize modern cost factors as we achieve new environmental and energy standards, satisfy heightened needs for technology, ensure student safety, fulfill community resource needs, and mesh with evolving teaching methods. Smart state funding will provide flexibility for county governments seeking cost-effective solutions to meeting student and community school construction needs. A smarter state-county school construction program will reduce unnecessary regulation, revise processes to work alongside county budget decisions, provide a county voice in state school construction funding decisions, promote statewide and regional efficiencies, and provide a meaningful opportunity to pursue alternative financing for school construction.

3. Energy Facility Siting – For decades, the state has exercised a very narrow pre-emption of local planning and zoning authority for major power plants, grounded in the need for the larger power grid to receive ample power supply. Recent cases before the state’s Public Service Commission threaten to dramatically widen that principle, applying it to virtually any generation facility, regardless of its size or importance to the regional power grid. A new generation of power facilities – from solar farms to alternative technologies – could be freed up to ignore local zoning and oversight. This decision threatens local land use control -- and the important rights of communities to guide their own historic, agricultural, and residential character.

4. Balancing Release of Police Body Camera Video – As governments work to implement sensible police body camera policies, the State should clarify how body camera footage is treated under Maryland’s Public Information Act (PIA). The PIA was largely created to handle paper documents and only recently updated to better handle static electronic records. However, the PIA still does not address the practical, technical, and privacy challenges facing a local government from potential requests of hundreds of hours of accumulated body camera video, all of which must be subjected to attorney review and redaction where appropriate. In light of such challenges, MACo supports legislation to strike a reasonable balance between making affected people having proper access to the footage while preventing overbroad, abusive, or invasive requests.