



2014 Legislative Session – MACo Highlights

DELIVERED ON LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES –MACo worked with the Administration to secure the use of Bay Restoration Fund monies in connecting failing septic systems located outside of Priority Funding Areas to wastewater treatment plants and establish a Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board that will give counties a voice in the development and operation of the MD FiRST public safety radio system.

SUCCEEDED IN THE STATE’S BUDGET PLAN – MACo secured \$10 million for county-only pothole repairs, restored cumulative inflationary increases for local health departments, and protected funding for Program Open Space. Adopted budget language creates a workgroup to study issues affecting local property tax revenues, and requires a report on “nonrecurring costs” to provide greater transparency and incentivize additional education spending.

MAINTAINED LOCAL AUTONOMY – MACo successfully amended numerous bills that encroached on local autonomy, providing a role for counties in the designation of Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise Zones, maintaining local authority to ban “cash for phones” automated purchasing machines, and retaining a county role in the hiring and dismissal of a county health officer.

PROTECTED LOCAL REVENUES – MACo created a reasonable rate of interest payable on tax refunds associated with a major pending local income tax case – possibly saving counties millions. MACo also amended or defeated legislation that would have reduced local tax revenues through the creation of new property tax credits or the expansion of subtraction modifications, all at the expense of county services.

SUPPORTED GOOD PUBLIC SAFETY REFORMS – MACo prevailed in its efforts to pass legislation enacting reasonable speed camera reforms and county-friendly updates to the Senator William H. Aross Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund.

DERAILED COSTLY RECYCLING MANDATES – MACo successfully opposed legislation that would have required a county-run bottle deposit program and dramatically narrowed legislation mandating broad new county recycling requirements to cover special events only.

DEFENDED COUNTY LIABILITY PROTECTIONS – MACo defeated a series of bills that would have repealed the 180-day notice requirement and damage caps for claims brought under the Local Government Tort Claims Act and awarded plaintiff attorneys fees in civil actions against local governments.

AVOIDED ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEXITIES – MACo successfully opposed or amended legislation that would have placed undue burdens on counties by requiring contractor prequalification based on a safety and health rating, changing tax sale notifications, mandating new athletic league procedures for sudden cardiac arrest and creating new public access requirements for Program Open Space sites.