



The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Policy Team is the voice of county governments in Annapolis. Each member of the Policy Team specializes in certain policy areas—they can be seen testifying in legislative committees alongside county government elected officials and professionals.

For news and analysis on issues affecting Maryland's county governments and Baltimore City, browse MACo's blog, *Conduit Street* at [conduitstreet.mdcounties.org](http://conduitstreet.mdcounties.org); follow MACo's Twitter feed, [@mdcounties](https://twitter.com/mdcounties); or listen to MACo's *Conduit Street Podcast* at [mdcounties.org/podcast](http://mdcounties.org/podcast).

To check the Association's position on a certain bill, visit MACo's Legislative Tracking Database: [mdcounties.org/Legislation](http://mdcounties.org/Legislation).

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## 2026 Legislative Initiatives

### RESTORE HIGHWAY USER REVENUES (HUR)

Well-maintained roads, bridges, and public transit are vital to public safety, economic development, and residents' quality of life. Local governments maintain more than four out of five road miles across Maryland, yet receive only a fraction of transportation revenues. The upcoming fiscal 2028 "cliff" will erase temporary restorations and return local transportation aid to recession-era levels, threatening maintenance schedules and federal matching opportunities. Maryland must redouble its commitment to a fair and durable state–local partnership for transportation by restoring Highway User Revenues to historic levels. A predictable funding framework will support safe and reliable infrastructure, foster economic growth, and strengthen the State's ability to meet shared transportation responsibilities.

***The fast-approaching fiscal "cliff" makes restoring Highway User Revenues an urgent priority. Maryland must uphold its commitment to local infrastructure and renew a fair, lasting partnership for transportation.***

### HOUSING TOOLS FOR COUNTIES (LOCAL LEAD, STATE ENABLEMENT)

Maryland's housing shortage demands flexible, locally tailored strategies that expand affordability and supply while maintaining fiscal and infrastructure balance. Counties can best design effective solutions that reflect community needs and local capacity. By empowering counties with new tools and targeted incentives, and by committing support to both worthy housing projects and related infrastructure, the State can strengthen its housing partnership and promote practical, sustainable growth. This initiative advances local leadership while aligning State support with community-driven development and responsible planning.

***This statewide priority empowers counties with practical tools and targeted support to address housing needs while maintaining fiscal balance, infrastructure capacity, and community input.***

### SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION: RESTORE BALANCE IN THE STATE–LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

The cost of building and maintaining safe, modern schools has risen sharply as materials, labor, and inflation drive project budgets higher. Temporary programs like Built to Learn helped bridge gaps, but those funds are expiring while project backlogs grow. Counties face mounting pressure to deliver modern learning environments without a consistent State funding partner. Maryland must renew its commitment to shared school construction funding and reestablish a balanced partnership. A sustained State investment will ensure that every student learns in a safe, modern classroom while supporting fiscal stability for county governments and local boards of education.

***Maryland must restore balance in the state–local school construction partnership through predictable, shared funding that meets modern facility needs and ensures fiscal stability for counties and school systems.***

### COUNTY BUDGET SECURITY

Rising State deficits, cost shifts, and unfunded mandates continue to erode local fiscal stability. Counties must balance budgets each year while absorbing new State obligations and unpredictable reimbursements that disrupt essential services. Protecting the integrity of county budgets is critical to maintaining reliable, high-quality services for residents. Maryland should reaffirm shared fiscal responsibility and guard against future cost shifts that jeopardize local budgets. This statewide county priority preserves local service capacity, promotes transparent budgeting, and ensures that both levels of government remain accountable for the programs they fund.

***Counties need stable, transparent fiscal partnerships that protect against cost shifts and unpredictable reimbursements, ensuring reliable local budgets and continued delivery of essential services.***