



2015 Legislative Session – MACo Highlights

DELIVERED ON COUNTY DRUG INITIATIVES – MACo secured passage of legislation to address the heroin crisis across the state by expanding a county-focused grant program for substance abuse treatment, and by securing civil immunity protections for properly trained law enforcement and first responders responding to a drug overdose call.

SUCCEEDED IN THE STATE’S BUDGET PLAN – MACo secured additional funds for local roadways, health departments, community colleges, local impact grants, and Program Open Space. Adopted budget language will moderate county fiscal effects associated with a pending local income tax case. Budget narrative continues an advisory council to oversee property assessments.

PREVAILED IN LOCAL LAND USE ISSUES – MACo ensured passage of a helpful bill on comprehensive plan authority, and retained reasonable charges for GIS products. MACo was also successful in securing interim discussions with the State Highway Administration on the highway entrance permit process.

PROTECTED LOCAL REVENUES – MACo successfully defeated or amended all bills introduced that would have mandated new property tax credits, and expanded exemptions from the personal property tax and local income tax; all of which would have cost counties millions.

SUPPORTED GOOD PUBLIC SAFETY REFORMS – MACo helped pass legislation that advances policies for the use of police body-worn cameras, focuses the State on justice reinvestment (meaning savings for jails), and requires juvenile offenders awaiting trial be housed in juvenile facilities rather than adult jails.

DEFENDED COUNTY LIABILITY PROTECTIONS – MACo defeated bills that would have allowed a prevailing plaintiff to recover attorney fees in civil actions for constitutional violations against local governments, created a new workers’ compensation presumption for law enforcement officers who wear duty belts, and altered established workers’ compensation payment modification policies for permanent partial disability injuries.

MAINTAINED LOCAL AUTONOMY – MACo successfully amended or defeated numerous bills that encroached on local autonomy, defeating county telecommunication pre-emption, avoiding state-wide regulation of animal shelters, and providing for a study of the local effects of drone usage.

AVOIDED UNFUNDED MANDATES AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEXITIES – MACo successfully opposed or amended burdensome or costly legislation by implementing community college collective bargaining, expanding sick leave policies, eliminating the homestead property tax credit application, undermining the tax sale process, creating a bottle deposit program, prohibiting lawn care pesticides on athletic fields, and making onerous and impractical changes to Maryland’s Public Information Act.