

2016 Legislative Initiatives

Local Transportation Funding Restoration – Restoring local Highway User Revenues (HUR) has been a MACo priority since the local share was slashed during recession-driven budgets. The former \$555 million share has been drastically cut back to \$167 million – with a mere \$26 million to be shared among 23 county governments. The cumulative loss of local roadway investment has topped \$2 billion – compromising roadway safety and betraying taxpayer expectations. With the recent expansion of transportation revenues and additional funds recently being allocated for roads and bridges, it is now time for local governments to again play a more significant role in the State’s transportation funding plan. MACo advocates for the restoration of local transportation funding.

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. State funding needs to 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. County governments share responsibility for financing K-12 school construction with the State, whose funding depends on statutory formulas and regulations. MACo advocates reviewing and updating the State’s school funding formulas and guidelines to promote the smartest and most effective funding for modern schools, and urges State policymakers to retain the State’s strong commitment to this top funding priority.

Addressing the Drug Problems Across the Counties – Heroin and drug misuse continue to be threats to the lives and livelihood of county citizens. Both an Administration Task Force and a General Assembly Joint Committee have taken the initiative to fight addiction, reduce drug misuse and related crime, and treat and reduce behavioral health and opioid use disorders. MACo supports these initiatives, and advocates broadly in support of budgetary and legislative action providing counties with resources to address drug misuse and provide vital education, prevention, and treatment.

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 affected people having proper access to the footage while preventing overbroad, abusive, or invasive requests.