



House Bill 539

Local Governments - Resilience Authorities - Authorization

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 18, 2020

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 539. The bill would allow local governments to create resilience authorities to aid in the financing of resilience infrastructure projects.

As many communities across the State struggle with the impacts of sea level rise, local governments are looking for means to effectively finance necessary mitigation infrastructure to protect waterfront areas from the effects of climate change. Private capital can make all the difference in getting these types of projects off the ground, and resilience authorities allow governments to attract other investments to achieve their goals. A stand-alone authority can also provide assurances that long-term projects remain outside the vagaries of short-term budget processes.

HB 539 would enable counties and municipalities, individually or in collaboration, to create and fund resilience authorities. These authorities would have the ability to issue and sell bonds, helping to finance resilience infrastructure. This strategy could also attract private funds to help meet the sizeable capital needs for these types of projects.

MACo supports the authorization of the resilience authorities as another “tool in the toolbox” that could leverage private investment. These authorities could provide an innovative development tool that would allow another way for local governments to finance needed resilience infrastructure.

HB 539 would authorize a new tool for financing resilience infrastructure development and provide an additional mechanism for local governments to meet their project goals. Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 539.