



House Bill 57

Property Tax – Tax Sales – Requirement to Sell

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: January 24, 2023

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 57. This bill would grant counties full flexibility in determining the frequency of tax sales, which could help minimize tax collection costs, assist with the payment of overdue taxes, and ultimately allow homeowners to remain in their homes.

The tax sale process – or more specifically, the potential for a property to go to tax sale – presents a much-needed tool of last resort to ensure that property owners remit payment for their fair share of taxes and charges connected to public services. Of course, no jurisdiction wants to send any property to tax sale if it can be avoided.

State law requires local governments to collect delinquent real property taxes and other unpaid charges, all of which are liens against real property. Under current law, county governments must bring to tax sale all property in arrears for at least two years.

MACo strongly prefers that homeowners receive all counseling, education, information, and support which may be available to them and additional assistance when appropriate, to help them pay on time and avoid going through tax sale. To that end, MACo supported legislation to establish the Homeowner Protection Program, which offers homeowners facing tax sale potential cost avoidance, and provide help like payment assistance, foreclosure mediation, and other services.

HB 57 would provide additional flexibility for local governments to facilitate access to support services at a time when it is most helpful. Accordingly, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 57.