



## Senate Bill 886

*State and Local Parks - Playgrounds - Safety Standards*  
*(Our Kids Play Safe Playground Safety Act of 2024)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: February 27, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 886 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill mandates counties follow certain standards related to playground equipment design, inspect playgrounds to be compliant with said standards every two years, and keep a record of inspections and plans to address safety hazards.

Counties request an amendment to clarify that if a structure is out of compliance with new regulations, but is considered safe, then counties may follow existing practices to modernize the structure. Updating parks equipment can be time-consuming and costly, and an unexpected mandate to update equipment immediately could result in a lapse in services expected by residents. This amendment would prevent that circumstance in situations where the equipment is deemed safe, but just needs updates to bring it into compliance with new regulations.

As the providers of most recreational services within Maryland, counties recognize the importance of ensuring residents can enjoy parks and playgrounds, free of worry about safety and suitability. To that effect, county parks departments largely already follow the standards outlined within SB 886 and perform regular inspections of playground equipment.

Counties request language clarifying playgrounds that are out of compliance due to recent standard updates may still follow regular county processes for upgrading those facilities:

On Page 2, line 20, INSERT:

**(D) IF AN INSPECTION REVEALS THAT A PLAYGROUND IS OUT OF COMPLIANCE DUE TO A RECENT UPDATE OF THE STANDARDS LISTED IN SUBSECTION (A), A LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAY USE ITS NORMAL PROCESS FOR UPGRADING PLAYGROUNDS IF THE LACK OF COMPLIANCE DOES NOT PRESENT A SAFETY HAZARD.**

With this amendment, SB 886 is a balanced approach, intended to keep Maryland's children safe while honoring existing processes that support available resources for all county services. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give SB 886 a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report.