

MML-SB 886 - FWA.pdf

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Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 27, 2024

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill: SB 886 – State and Local Parks - Playgrounds - Safety Standards (Our Kids Play Safe Playground Safety Act of 2024)

Position: Support with Amendment

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League supports Senate Bill 886, with one suggested technical amendment. Understanding and appreciating that the bill's goal is increased playground safety, our members feel the inspections performed in section (B) should be performed by a certified playground inspector. The Maryland Recreation and Parks Association and National Recreation and Parks Association offer a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certification program several times a year. This certification ensures that the inspector brings the most comprehensive and up-to-date training on playground safety issues including hazard identification, equipment specifications, surfacing requirements and risk management methods to the inspection.

This could be accomplished with the following change to Section (B), page 2, lines 13-15:

(B) AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 2 YEARS, EACH UNIT OF STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR A PLAYGROUND SHALL INSPECT THE PLAYGROUND TO EVALUATE COMPLIANCE WITH SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, FOLLOWING CERTIFIED PLAYGROUND SAFETY INSPECTOR STANDARDS PURSUANT TO THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION.

With this change, the Maryland Municipal League would respectfully request a favorable committee report for Senate Bill 886.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FWA



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.