



House Bill 323

*Real Property - Limitations on Summoning Law Enforcement
or Emergency Services - Prohibition*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: March 29, 2022

From: D'Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 323. This bill would, among other provisions, prevent local governments from enacting laws establishing a threshold on requests for law enforcement or emergency services to visit a residential property resulting in said property being designated a nuisance, or otherwise penalizing someone for summoning the assistance of law enforcement or emergency services.

No individual in immediate need for assistance from law enforcement or emergency services should be deterred from accessing these vital county services. HB 323 understandably seeks to protect individuals experiencing domestic abuse, sexual assault, and many other serious life-threatening offenses, by shielding them from potential repercussions by property owners arising from these police calls.

Through carefully constructed amendments proposed by the bill sponsor and adopted by the Maryland House of Delegates, the scope of HB 323 has been slightly narrowed to ensure it does not extend to certain situations in which individuals repeatedly request assistance with parking or when neighbors retaliate against one another by summoning law enforcement. MACo had previously expressed concerns that these scenarios could potentially result in much needed and overextended public safety resources being diverted to situations not warranting them.

The amended HB 323 preserves some county autonomy regarding the dispatch of public safety resources, while ensuring individuals facing potentially life-threatening situations are not deterred from summoning law enforcement. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 323.