



## **House Bill 329**

### *Election Law – Ballots – Processing and Reporting Procedures*

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

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 8, 2022

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 329 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would provide local boards of elections with necessary and reasonable flexibility to canvass mail-in ballots, avoiding administrative complications that could disrupt the timely certification of election results.

Current law fails to recognize modern trends in voter preference, capabilities of new technologies, and realities of administering elections in our local communities. As more voters opt to cast mail-in ballots, local boards require flexibility to meet critical certification deadlines and provide meaningful results after the polls close on election day.

State law prohibits local boards from canvassing mail-in ballots until the Wednesday following an election. HB 329 would allow for canvassing of mail-in ballots up to eight days before election day.

While HB 329 is one of several bills that aim to update and clarify election canvass processes and procedures, counties contend that granting local boards limited discretion in scheduling the main-in ballot canvass is a sensible solution to serve and react to community needs. **MACo would be pleased to join local election administrators in working with the Committee to develop bill language that accomplishes these goals reasonably.**

As such, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 329.