



Senate Bill 835

Public Schools - Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning Systems and Carbon Dioxide Monitors - Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

MACo Position:

To: Budget & Taxation Committee

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Date: March 7, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) respectfully submits this **LETTER OF INFORMATION** on SB 835.

The bill would require the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) to complete an initial statewide heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems assessment of all public school facilities and would require the Commission to develop heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning educational facilities sufficiency standards. The bill also requires local school systems to submit a plan to the IAC on how they will remediate any problems identified by the assessment.

Counties understand the intent of SB 835 and agree with the merits of the bill to evaluate critical systems related to air quality and safety and to provide the safest facilities for Maryland's students and school staff. In fact, many counties have already performed the kinds of assessments SB 835 seeks to perform statewide.

Counties are concerned about the duplication of these assessments after several local jurisdictions have already completed similar evaluations and the accompanying potential to squander state and local resources. Counties are also concerned with potential implications if the new State assessment is misaligned with the findings of the local assessments.

Furthermore, should the Committee decide to require a new assessment as proposed under SB 835, any findings requiring remediation should be tied to additional State funding via relevant programs like the Aging Schools Program and the Healthy School Facility Fund. Additionally, local school systems and counties should be held harmless for the capital projects already completed or on the works addressing air and ventilation systems based on the assessments they had independently completed.

Counties look forward to working with the Committee to address the safety and air quality of public school facilities across the state. MACo respectfully asks that in doing so, the State consider the work of counties and local school systems, as to not duplicate efforts or waste resources.