



House Bill 147

Environment – Climate Crisis Plan – Requirement

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 8, 2023

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 147. The bill requires all counties to adopt a broad and unwieldy climate crisis plan, even though counties would not have the ability to implement it.

HB 147 is clearly introduced with the goal of reducing emissions and energy consumption across the public and private sectors. Counties both recognize and support their proper role as players in helping to address and mitigate climate change. In every corner of the state, counties are taking action to reduce emissions and leave a healthy environment for the next generation.

While counties already partner with the State on stewardship responsibilities, HB 147 presumes that the county level is the only tier of government suitable for developing these plans. While counties frequently seek authority and flexibility under state law, a matter as widespread as climate response stretches beyond political boundaries – and has generally been best addressed at the watershed, regional, or larger scope.

Multiple Maryland counties have adopted climate action plans, with varying focus. However, the breadth and scope of the plans envisioned under HB 147 are broader and far more all-encompassing than any amount of authority currently vested in county governing bodies. *The proposed plan includes aspirations to change not only public but private buildings, vehicles, energy systems, and the like.* Mandating each individual county to develop plans for mass transit strains the imagination – as no intra-county system would pass any reasonable cost/benefit analysis.

Requiring these county plans, without any capacity to affect their components, underscores the incorrect placement of these plans at the county level. Counties lack the authority to back up the broad vision of the plans, and almost certainly lack both the expertise and the resources to single-handedly generate a product with the level of detail required under HB 147.

Counties are already taking actions to mitigate climate change, but the framework proposed in HB 147 is not tenable. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 147.