



House Bill 332

Public Safety – Law Enforcement – Body-Worn Cameras
(Body-Worn Camera Appropriation and Financing Act of 2023)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judiciary Committee

Date: February 7, 2023

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 332. This bill would enable counties with the option to access necessary provisions for implementing a body-worn camera program via contracts negotiated by the Department of General Services on behalf of state and local law enforcement agencies. Clarifying amendments could smooth the procurement process for a more readily manageable multi-party offering.

Giving counties the ability to take part in contracts that are negotiated at the state level avoids a mass duplication of effort or the potential for individual counties to incur the kind of premiums that often accompany single-user contracts. Additionally, under this legislation, counties who have taken the initiative to get their body-worn camera programs up and running would reserve the flexibility to carry on with their own provisions, or to evaluate the central offerings as warranted.

The forthcoming mandate that each county law enforcement officer be equipped with a body-worn camera carries a significant expense, both for the equipment and secure storage of the resulting footage. The infrastructure involved in this process is extensive. Beyond the cameras, these programs require storage capacity for millions of hours of video footage, software for the review and redaction of footage as necessary, and cyber-security provisions to protect this particularly sensitive material. The staff to manage these programs includes attorneys, record custodians, information technology specialists as well as collaboration with law enforcement officers.

While this legislation is an important step in the direction of partnership, counties would like to ensure the process is streamlined for all involved. MACo believes the following amendments would bring more clarity to the process for counties to opt-in to the state provisions.

On page 2, line 19 strike “**AT THE REQUEST OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY,**”

On page 2, line 21, after “**CONTRACTS**” insert “**FOR STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, AS WELL AS LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OPTING TO USE THEIR PROVISIONS,**”

On page 2, line 27, after the period insert “**(3) THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES SHALL INFORM LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OF THE AVAILABLE PROVISIONS**”

These clarifying amendments would simplify the process for both local law enforcement agencies and procurement officials in the Department of General Services, while establishing a manageable and collaborative process for navigating this approaching county mandate. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 332, and also encourages the Committee to consider clarifying amendments.