



## Senate Bill 532

### *Commission to Advance Lithium–Ion Battery Safety in Maryland*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, & Environment  
Committee

Date: February 22, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 532. This bill represents the work product of a broad coalition of stakeholders in firefighting and renewable energy. As the push toward electrification continues, lithium ion (LI) batteries will grow in importance both at the consumer end as well as at utility scale. **Unlike other types of batteries, any sized LI battery failure can produce fires several scales of magnitude more destructive than fires from other battery types or from fossil fuels.** While it is clear that LI batteries will be a significant element of future infrastructure, Maryland must do more to establish safety guidelines today in order to protect lives tomorrow.

SB 532 establishes the Commission to Advance Lithium Battery Safety in Maryland, and charges the body with making legislative, regulatory, programmatic, or other recommendations related to LI battery safety. The scope of this mission is broad and includes:

- Best practices and guidelines:
  - To prevent, detect, and suppress lithium–ion battery fires in consumer, transportation, and utility applications;
  - To prevent, detect, and suppress lithium–ion fires at recycling facilities; and
  - For reusing and recycling lithium–ion batteries;
- The viability of extended producer responsibility for lithium–ion batteries;
- Training, education, and other information to better inform the public regarding lithium–ion battery safety; and
- Any other global issues the Commission may consider useful for enhancing the safety and reuse of batteries in the state.

Additionally, MACo has been working with stakeholders on a set of amendments which should be considered friendly. These amendments include:

- Slightly expanding the Commission to include the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute and the Power Plant Research Program, in addition to the Public Service Commission.
- Slightly expanding the scope of the Commission to include best standards and decommissioning for LI batteries.

This is a life-or-death issue, and it will only grow in importance. MACo stands ready to work with the Committee and stakeholders to answer questions and to advance this issue. For the reasons mentioned above, MACo urges the Committee to give SB 532 a **FAVORABLE** report.