



Maryland Municipal League  
*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

## TESTIMONY

February 13, 2025

**Committee:** House Environment and Transportation Committee

**Bill:** HB 626 - Real Estate Development and Highway Rights-of-Way - Installation of Broadband Micro Conduits and Microducts

**Position:** Favorable

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports House Bill 626. The bill mandates that a buried fiber optic cable in a highway right-of-way includes a conduit with seven microducts. Additionally, a local government that maintains the right-of-way shall, upon request, grant access to a broadband service provider to the conduit, for a reasonable fee.

Municipal governments maintain about 9% of lane miles in the State in some of the most densely populated areas that demand reliable broadband access. A common problem that municipalities face as right-of-way owners is when utility companies access their underground facilities under the roadway at different times, disrupting traffic flow and inconveniencing residents and businesses. Coordinating the digging schedules of multiple utility companies and managing space under a roadway can be challenging, but this bill helps in those areas.

Allowing the installation of conduit with seven microducts reduces the disruption each time a broadband service provider needs to access their connection point, while also promoting multiple providers to install their fiber cables. These microducts are smaller in size thus requiring a less disruptive digging process to access them. This type of “dig once” policy simplifies the maintenance procedure while also expanding broadband opportunities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 626. For more information, please contact Bill Jorch, Director, Public Policy and Research at [billj@mdmunicipal.org](mailto:billj@mdmunicipal.org). Thank you in advance for your consideration.