



House Bill 958

Railroads - Safety Requirements (Maryland Railway Safety Act of 2025)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: February 20, 2025

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 958 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill generally addresses railroad safety in Maryland, including bolstering requirements governing railroads' provision of hazardous materials information to state and federal emergency management officials.

Providing local emergency managers with access to accurate and up-to-date information about hazardous materials shipments on trains is a matter of public safety and a fundamental responsibility of the government to protect its residents. As such, MACo requests an amendment to ensure rail hazmat information is available to the appropriate federal, state, and county emergency management officials.

Trains move through Maryland communities daily, carrying goods vital to the state and regional economy. Some of these shipments include hazardous materials that, if mishandled or involved in an accident, pose serious risks to public safety, property, and the environment. From flammable liquids to toxic gases, these materials present complex challenges, and any incident could have devastating consequences.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to establish and maintain a database on hazardous materials and waste moving by rail in Maryland. Under the bill, the Commissioner must make the information available to the Maryland Department of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Local emergency managers play a critical role in safeguarding communities from emergencies. Still, their ability to prepare for and respond to hazardous materials incidents depends on access to timely, comprehensive information. Without precise data on the movement of hazardous materials through their jurisdictions, counties face serious challenges in planning for potential spills, coordinating evacuations, and delivering effective emergency care. **Gaps in this vital knowledge put both responders and residents at unnecessary risk.**

Ensuring county emergency managers have access to this critical information is essential to safeguarding public safety, enhancing emergency preparedness, and providing effective response and recovery efforts in the face of hazardous materials incidents. For these reasons, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 958.