



House Bill 97

Economic Development - County or Municipal Corporation Economic Development Authority - Powers and Use of Proceeds

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Ways and Means and Environment and
Transportation Committees

Date: February 20, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 97 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill expands the scope of certain economic and industrial development authorities established by county governments.

Maryland is facing historic challenges this legislative session. Uncertainty over the state economy, how changes in Washington will affect Marylanders, lags in affordable housing production, a budding energy crisis brought on by nearby high energy-users, and a myriad of other important issues all need to be addressed by legislators in 2025. The single thread that binds all of these issues together is that a more resilient, faster growing, diverse economy will largely insulate our constituents from some of the worst headwinds still beyond the horizon. This bill gives counties a stronger tool to help build a broader economy in the communities that our mutual constituents call home.

Counties applaud the intent of HB 97 and are keenly interested in partnership and being proactive stakeholders in steering Maryland into a more vibrant future. Counties offer one amendment to buttress a local legislative body's oversight and auditing authority over the economic and industrial development authorities which may be created under this bill:

- On page 7, in line 13, after "AREA PLAN.", insert: "THE LEGISLATIVE BODY OF A COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY SHALL HAVE FULL AUDITING AND OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY OVER AN ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY."

With this amendment, HB 97 would become another more flexible tool in the toolbox to spur economic growth and resilience. For this reason, MACo urges the Committees to give HB 97 a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**.