



House Bill 1459

Public Safety – Stationary Energy Storage Systems

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: March 13, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1459 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill would require owners of stationary energy storage systems to fund specialized training and equipment for the local fire departments responsible for emergency response.

Utility-scale battery storage presents a range of issues that policymakers are still working to address. Unlike traditional fires, utility-scale battery fires can burn hotter and longer and may release significant amounts of toxic chemicals. The equipment, resources, and sustained effort required to respond to these incidents can be orders of magnitude greater than what many county fire departments are reasonably equipped to handle.

Counties support the intent of HB 1459 to better prepare fire departments as battery storage deployment expands. However, counties request clarifying amendments to ensure this fee framework applies only to commercial and industrial systems. While some residences are beginning to install energy storage options, assessing a new fee on residential uses would further exacerbate already rising housing costs.

Counties support the intent of HB 1459 and urge the Committee to clarify the bill's scope to exclude lower-risk residential uses. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 1459.