



Senate Bill 790

Public Health Reform Act

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Finance and Budget & Taxation Committees

Date: March 10, 2026

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 790 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill advances key recommendations from the Commission on Public Health's final report and continues the efforts to strengthen Maryland's public health infrastructure.

SB 790 includes several operational improvements that will meaningfully support local health departments (LHDs) and local operations. Providing local health officers with flexibility to appoint individuals to fully funded local positions without State approval removes unnecessary administrative barriers and allows counties to respond more quickly to urgent community needs. Similarly, authorizing a health officer to proceed with a contract if the Secretary does not respond within seven days ensures timely program implementation while preserving State oversight. These changes will help reduce delays that can hinder service delivery.

The bill's creation of a Public Health Workforce Development Fund is another critical step forward. Supporting education and training for the public health workforce will strengthen recruitment and retention efforts and help ensure Maryland is prepared for future public health challenges. In addition, provisions requiring the Department to notify and offer counties the opportunity to participate in electronic health record procurements will promote better coordination, interoperability, and operational efficiency across jurisdictions.

Counties support continuation of the Commission's oversight role in monitoring implementation of its recommendations. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to provide quarterly updates to the Commission. Because implementation of the recommendations is shared among the Department, local health departments, and other partners, counties recommend clarifying that local health departments have a defined role in contributing to those updates. Providing a clear pathway for local input will ensure the Commission receives comprehensive, statewide information to inform its reports to the General Assembly and the public and to accurately reflect progress across all implementing entities. For these reasons, MACo respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 790 (*MACo's suggested amendments are on the next page*).

MACo Amendments on SB 790

- On page 10, in line 14, after "QUARTER" insert "**IN CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND ANY OTHER ENTITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS.**"