



**SB 790 – PUBLIC HEALTH REFORM ACT
WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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For the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO)
Position: Support – March 10, 2026*

On behalf of the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO), the professional association of the chief executives of the state’s 24 local public health departments (LHDs), and as MACHO President, I provide our strong support of SB 790.

MACHO and each Local Health Officer (LHO) and LHD in Maryland have been deeply invested in the planning, workgroups, assessment, and recommendation development activities of the Commission on Public Health (CoPH) since the creation of the CoPH in 2023. MACHO appreciates that our public health champions in the General Assembly have introduced this legislation. The bill is an important first step to ensure that the Final Report submitted in 2025 is ultimately fully realized to create sustainable improvements to public health systems that benefit everyone who lives, learns, and works in Maryland. The bill’s components are recommendations directly from the Commission’s Final Report.

SB 790 would help ensure several key things important to LHDs:

Electronic health record for Maryland’s public health system:

The proposed bill provides the opportunity for LHDs to provide input on a statewide EHR system that could facilitate improved data collection and analysis, improved interoperability, and enhanced coordination with other statewide entities.

Strengthening Maryland’s public health workforce:

Creating a Public Health Workforce Development Fund and streamlining the hiring process by allowing LHOs to directly appoint positions that are not funded through the state, reduces delays, and ensures that LHDs are able to quickly move through the recruitment process and hire competitive candidates for key positions in their agencies.

Improving healthcare system collaboration and coordination:

The bill would permit LHOs to serve on hospital boards, which will enhance implementation of the state’s AHEAD model and strengthen Maryland’s healthcare system overall.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this Support testimony for SB 790. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*