



Senate Bill 64

*Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice - Publication in Newspaper or Newspaper in
General Circulation - Digital Newspapers*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENT

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: January 22, 2026

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 64 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill authorizes a county to publish required public notices in a qualifying newspaper or digital publication to maintain compliance with state law. This creates both cost savings and more flexibility for local governments in meeting this requirement.

Currently, certain legal notices and advertisements often required of local governments must be published in a "newspaper of general circulation." With fewer print outlets, local governments face challenges in publishing required notices. This bill provides counties with a practical and necessary solution to meet legal notice requirements as traditional newspapers transition to digital formats or cease operations altogether. SB 64 offers an additional option for local jurisdictions to maintain compliance if a local jurisdiction lacks an eligible print news outlet or if a digital option receives a more regular local readership than local print.

Additionally, MACo supports the reasonable and clear eligibility criteria to ensure these platforms are reliable and serve the public interest. Platforms used for public notices should demonstrate a commitment to professional standards, such as producing original content and maintaining a tangible connection to the communities they serve. These safeguards ensure residents can access timely, accurate, and meaningful information while properly allowing counties to satisfy public notice provisions in a changing media landscape.

In looking to the future and how media may continue to evolve, counties would offer one clarifying amendment. The bill identifies a very specific type of digital option for publishing notices. However, there is likely to be a time in the future when the options available for publication across all jurisdictions do not meet all the criteria in the bill. To ensure that the changes to this statute will address the challenges of both today and decades to come, counties request the addition of an alternative option for digital publication in the absence of one consistent with the bill's standards.

SB 64 modernizes how county governments are required to do business and ensures local operations can continue without interruption regardless of the market shifts in news and information distribution. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 64.