



House Bill 323

*Real Property - Limitations on Summoning Law Enforcement
or Emergency Services - Prohibition*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judiciary Committee

WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 9, 2022

From: D'Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 323 **with AMENDMENTS**. This bill would, among other provisions, prevent local governments from enacting laws establishing a threshold on requests for law enforcement or emergency services to visit a residential property resulting in said property being designated a nuisance, or otherwise penalizing someone for summoning the assistance of law enforcement or emergency services.

No individual in immediate need for assistance from law enforcement or emergency services should be deterred from accessing these vital county services. HB 323 understandably seeks to protect individuals experiencing domestic abuse, sexual assault, and many other serious life-threatening offenses, by shielding them from potential repercussions by property owners arising from these police calls.

Unfortunately, the scope of HB 323 is unlimited and would also extend to situations in which individuals repeatedly request assistance with litter or when neighbors retaliate against one another by summoning law enforcement. These scenarios could potentially result in much needed and overextended public safety resources being diverted to situations not warranting them. To ensure local governments can sensibly preserve these resources, MACo requests the following amendments to HB 323:

- On page 4, line 24, after "PROPERTY" insert "CONCERNING AN OFFENSE INCLUDED IN THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE"
- On page 4, line 29, after "PROPERTY" insert "CONCERNING AN OFFENSE INCLUDED IN THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE"
- On page 5, line 3, after "PROPERTY" insert "CONCERNING AN OFFENSE INCLUDED IN THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE"

The above amendments would preserve some county autonomy regarding the dispatch of public safety resources, while ensuring individuals facing potentially life-threatening situations are not deterred from summoning law enforcement. For this reason, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 323.