



House Bill 1033

Environment and Energy - Investment in Overburdened Communities

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Appropriations and Economic Matters
Committees

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From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 1033. The bill would require state and local governments to direct at least 40% of overall spending, covering various environmental areas, toward overburdened communities.

Counties recognize and support their role in ensuring that Maryland maintains a socially and ecologically healthy environment. But there are a variety of metrics, data points, and other reasoning that go into determining where limited local resources should be directed. While counties do recognize the intent of HB 1033, this legislation would represent a dramatic overreach into local autonomy and cause significant disruptions to essential public projects, and even minor decision-making regarding public infrastructure upkeep and maintenance.

This bill is broad in both its scope and effect. By tying up nearly half of all resources going into environmental projects, this bill drastically limits the flexibility of county governments to respond to local needs. Critical infrastructure projects located in areas not classified as overburdened communities, but are nonetheless vital to those living in overburdened communities and elsewhere, would be tied up if not made entirely non-viable. Broad mandates such as the one currently proposed in HB 1033 carry significant unforeseen consequences – a practical impediment to target universal snowfall, or a local disaster impact, for instance.

Counties are properly held accountable for their decision-making and have established processes for evaluating consequential actions and investments. HB 1033 would slow the progress of the very goal it wishes to achieve by imposing rigid and resource-consuming mandates on county governments who are already diligently addressing these concerns within their own jurisdictions. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 1033.