



House Bill 764

State Lottery Fund - Bus Rapid Transit Fund Distribution - Alterations

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committees

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From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 764. This bill provides more predictability and certainty in public bus rapid transit services by requiring the State Lottery Fund to allocate \$27 million per year to the Bus Rapid Transit Fund.

Public transit represents one of the greatest opportunities to simultaneously reduce emissions and improve the economic vitality of our communities. A major barrier to standing up new transit services is the significant capital expense associated with purchasing new machines and building out new infrastructure. For jurisdictions of any size, bus rapid transit (BRT) sits at an important nexus, offering affordability and scalability. Previously, only the larger jurisdictions focused on BRT as a component of service delivery, but increasingly, moderate and smaller jurisdictions have begun to phase in adoption of BRT systems, with needed state support.

The importance of HB 764 is that it provides predictability to a fund that previously did not have a required minimum threshold. Previously, the Bus Rapid Transit Fund was required to be funded up to \$27 million, but that total could be less. By providing certainty for counties that resources will be provided, more jurisdictions are incentivized to examine BRT as a real option for their constituents.

As operators of BRT systems, counties applaud the focus on funding and predictability. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to issue HB 764 a **FAVORABLE** report.