



House Bill 517

Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 18, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko & Charlotte Fleckenstein

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 517. The bill would clarify the intent of the General Assembly that counties have the power to regulate outdoor air quality and enact regulations that are as strict or stricter than the federal and state floors.

Local jurisdictions deserve the flexibility to tailor environmental standards to serve their communities. Counties recognize the importance of a healthy environment and have largely been leading the charge in securing better environmental outcomes. The General Assembly has empowered and continues to empower counties in taking this lead. Recently, though, some courts have thrown doubt on the General Assembly's intent regarding this grant of authority – specifically, in the area of air quality. This doubt has led to costly litigation and has hampered local governments' ability to push for a healthier environment.

HB 517 is necessary to clarify the intent of the General Assembly and solidify that counties have the authority to go above and beyond federal and state air quality standards. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 517.