



House Bill 779

Natural Resources - Riverine Siting and Design Criteria - Requirements

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: February 25, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 779. The bill establishes new standards for the design and siting of state and county capital projects located within the 500-year river floodplain. In doing so, it would substantially expand the scope and responsibilities of the Coast Smart Council—an entity previously focused on coastal, rather than riverine, considerations.

Maryland is facing a significant housing shortage. In recent sessions, the General Assembly has advanced a broad slate of housing legislation, and in 2026, both the Governor and presiding officers have signaled housing affordability as a top priority. As drafted, HB 779 would move in the opposite direction by adding new constraints that could make it more difficult and more expensive for counties to deliver the public facilities needed to support growth. Whether the project was government subsidized housing, or amenities that help make more housing practically possible, both could be gravely constrained by this bill.

HB 779 is broad in application and would impose additional requirements on a wide range of public projects. Practically, this could drive up project costs for facilities located near rivers or within mapped floodplain areas, at a time when infrastructure capacity is already a central challenge for growing communities. Without accompanying resources to meet these heightened standards, the bill could limit what projects the State and local governments can realistically advance, slowing delivery of the infrastructure that communities need.

Counties share the State's goal of planning for climate risk and making prudent, resilient public investments. However, as drafted, HB 779 could undermine counties' ability to deliver timely and cost-effective infrastructure that supports housing affordability and broader community needs. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 779.