



## House Bill 31

### *Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2016*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 10, 2016

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 31. While well-intentioned, the bill would impose a new financial burden on Maryland families and small businesses.

HB 31 would prohibit a store from distributing plastic disposable carryout bags to customers at no cost and requires a store to collect a 10-cent fee for each paper disposable carryout bag provided to a customer.

A store may retain 5 cents from each 10-cent fee or 7 cents if the store has a bag credit program (the store pays a customer a credit of at least 5 cents for each bag the customer provides for packaging the customer's purchases).

Any remaining funds go to the Comptroller of Maryland, who retains an amount necessary for the administration of monies, and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, which receives a portion to cover implementation and enforcement costs. If any funds remain after that, they go to the counties, proportional to the counties' population for recycling and litter control, community greening, and water pollution reduction projects.

Plastic bags and even paper bags pose environmental challenges and their usage needs to be addressed. However, MACo is concerned that the imposition of the 10-cent fee per paper bag would, over time, constitute an onerous and challenging cost for many working families. Additionally, small businesses would face challenges and costs to implement the bill's provisions, and if they chose, the bag credit program.

In conclusion, HB 31 attempts to address an important issue but its solution would impose new costs on families and small businesses. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 31 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.