



House Bill 79

*Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice – Publication in Newspaper or Newspaper in
General Circulation – Online Newspapers*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations
Committee

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The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 79. The bill authorizes the use of online newspapers to satisfy any statutory requirement to publish certain legal notices in a newspaper of general circulation.

The bill would modernize outdated notice requirements in state law. The internet has become the primary means of communication and information dissemination in the United States. According to research from the Pew Research Center, 90 percent of Americans use the internet, and 73 percent have home broadband.¹ Smartphone ownership is now at 81 percent.²

The number of local papers has declined over time, leaving local governments with few options. Some local papers may transition to online-only offerings, leaving a jurisdiction with no printed newspaper in which to publish notices. This would harm local government's ability to be compliant with existing state law.

HB 79 provides reasonable accommodation for local governments to post required notices in online newspapers of general circulation without radically reforming the notice process. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 79 a **FAVORABLE** report.

¹ *Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet*, Pew Research Center (June 12, 2019)

² *Mobile Fact Sheet*, Pew Research Center (June 12, 2019)