



House Bill 144

Libraries - Regional, State, and County - Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

Date: February 4, 2016

To: Ways and Means Committee

From: Robin Clark Eilenberg

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 144. This legislation would provide additional funding for county libraries by accelerating increases to the library funding formula.

Maryland's counties share funding responsibility with the State for our libraries and support additional resources for them. County governments directed more than \$200 million of their operating budget general funds in fiscal year 2016 to supporting libraries.

Counties are proud to support libraries because they are an integral facet to a county's ability to build community, and we would appreciate additional State support to help them further their aims. Already, libraries provide a safe place for our children to spend time after school and they offer early literacy programs for young children. They also provide internet access to the public and support for job-seekers and small business owners.

HB 144 describes incremental increases in State funding for libraries and regional resource centers, with the aim of quickly increasing library funding that the State necessarily reduced during the recession. An acceleration in State funding will help libraries to continue to offer community services that are key to our full economic recovery.

For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 144 and recommends the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE** report.