



House Bill 482

Vehicle Laws – Law Enforcement Transport Vehicles – Recording Equipment

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Judiciary Committee

Date: February 23, 2016

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 482. This bill creates an unfunded mandate by requiring police transport vehicles to be equipped with audio and video recording equipment in passenger areas.

It is within the purview of local law enforcement agencies to determine what technology would be of best use and feasibility for their agency. The requirement for transport cameras should not be universally forced upon agencies of varying size, needs, priorities and resources.

HB 482 presents both fiscal and technical difficulties. The upfront costs to obtain audio and video recording equipment as well as the costs to retrofit transport vehicles with the equipment can be significant – upwards of thousands of dollars per vehicle.

Local governments would also face additional costs and responsibility for the maintenance and storage of camera footage. The extent of which would depend on how much footage is being generated and how long it must be stored.

Rather than imposing a mandate, grants and other technical support could be explored as a means of expanding use and access to transport camera systems. This approach would be similar to that taken for body cameras, which are not required under state law but are incentivized through state and federal grant programs.

While cameras can serve as a tool for transparency and accountability, their implementation can be costly and technologically difficult for county governments. Because county law enforcement agencies vary in needs and resources, the use of cameras should be optional, not mandatory. For these reasons, MACo urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 482.