



House Bill 507

Clean Water Commerce Act of 2021

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Environment and Transportation and
Appropriations Committees

Date: February 10, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 507 WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill extends the Clean Water Commerce Act that was set to sunset, preserving a funding tool that can assist both the State and counties in meeting their Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements. **MACo supports a set of multi-stakeholder amendments to clarify its effects, and to avoid an unwanted depletion of other priorities.**

With the amendments proposed by the workgroup, HB 507 would allow the Maryland Department of the Environment (the Department) to use up to \$20 million a year from the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) to purchase nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment practices in support of restoring the Chesapeake Bay. According to the Department, this does not impair the availability of other BRF funding. Investments will need to prioritize cost-effectiveness and longevity of benefits. MACo believes that investments should continue to be made in rural areas, where funding is especially limited.

MACo has always been supportive of having as many “tools in the toolbox” as possible to help meet our Bay TMDL goals. This bill gives MACo a continued role in helping to guide investments through a representative on the BRF Advisory Committee. With the workgroup amendments, HB 507 would maintain a useful and flexible tool that could assist both the State and counties in meeting our Chesapeake Bay restoration targets while protecting key local uses of the BRF and continuing appropriate oversight.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committees to issue a report of **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** for HB 507.