



House Bill 535

Transportation - Complete Streets Program - Establishment

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: April 3, 2018

From: Barbara Zektick

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 535. This bill creates a competitive grant program making Transportation Trust Fund dollars available to local governments for the planning and design of Complete Streets projects.

Counties support this program as a means to incentivize and encourage development of Complete Streets policies and projects on local roads. "Complete Streets" embodies the principle that roads should be designed to accommodate not only single-occupancy vehicles, but also pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and other modes of transportation. When implemented well and correctly, they can keep all road users safer, alleviate congestion, provide better access for businesses, and improve air quality.

Local governments own and maintain 83 percent of the roads in the State of Maryland, making them the best catalyst for incorporating Complete Streets principles into Maryland's transportation network. However, with the decimation of highway user revenues resulting in over \$3 billion diverted from local roads funding, counties struggle to accomplish meaningful preventive maintenance on their roads, much less dedicate resources to redesigning streets with all users in mind.

Counties appreciate the significant efforts by the General Assembly this session to address this issue, including providing additional local transportation aid to local governments. This bill further addresses this reality by initiating the dedication of funding to local roads specifically to transform our state's transportation network into one which prioritizes pedestrians, cyclists, and transit passengers as highly as it prioritizes cars. MACo supports this bill because it provides a step in the right direction toward that end.

For the reasons stated above, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 535 and urges the Committee to grant it a **FAVORABLE** report.