



## House Bill 552

### *Transportation - Motor Fuel Tax and Highway User Revenue – Increased Local Share*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 23, 2017

From: Barbara Zektick

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) strongly **SUPPORTS** HB 552. This bill restores highway user revenues to local governments, ensures that new gas tax revenues resulting from Chapter 429 of 2013 are shared equitably with local governments, and amends the Maryland Constitution to prevent depletion of highway user revenues from local governments in the future.

*This bill will supply desperately needed revenue to repair and maintain local roads and bridges.*

Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City identified reinvestment in local roads, bridges, and infrastructure as one of their top legislative initiatives this Session. All 24 jurisdictions – of varying sizes, budgets, and regions – are united in the need for a Local Infrastructure Fast Track for Maryland (LIFT 4 MD).

Recession-driven cost shifts have left local roadways lacking proper maintenance, bridges in dire need, and other public infrastructure neglected. Re-investing in infrastructure – a call heard at every level of government – is good for Maryland jobs, business attractiveness, and quality of life across the state.

For more than 40 years, local roadways received 30% of highway user revenues (motor fuel tax and vehicle registration fees). The Great Recession forced cuts to this area deeper than those in any other component of the state budget. 23 counties' share of funds plummeted from \$282 million in 2007 to only \$27 million today. Baltimore City alone now receives \$85 million less each year than before the cuts. The cumulative loss of local roadway investment since Fiscal 2010 is nearly \$3 billion.

It is unquestionable that local governments maintain the lion's share of the roads and bridges in our state. Unlike most other states, in Maryland, local governments own and maintain 83% of the roads. Even recognizing that state arterials have more lanes than local roads do, local governments still own and maintain 77% of the lane miles in Maryland. Every resident depends on local roadways.

Highway user revenues fund roads and bridges throughout our entire state, through an equitable, time-tested formula based on road mileage and vehicle registrations. This touches the roads our kids ride to school, the roads our first responders travel to keep us safe, and the roads where we all live.

HB 552 brings transportation dollars back to 83% of the roads and bridges in Maryland, and brings transportation dollars back to the roads leading to everyone's home. Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee give HB 552 a **FAVORABLE** recommendation.