



House Bill 645

*Business Regulation – Wireless Security Systems – Local Government
Licenses and Permits*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
with AMENDMENTS

To: Economic Matters

Date: February 20, 2018

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 645 with AMENDMENTS** to establish sensible parameters on the regulation of wireless security systems.

HB 645 defines a wireless security system and prohibits local governments from requiring any license or permit to install, maintain, inspect, replace, or service a wireless security system that does not require a fire protection plan review. As introduced, the bill is vague on the specific license or permit prohibition. It does not account for longstanding, commonsense state and local public safety protections for security systems, which should apply regardless of whether the security system is wired or not. MACo believes an amended version of the bill could accomplish these objectives more clearly, and without upending important and appropriate local oversight.

The amendments sought by the counties would ensure that:

- (1) Low voltage is explicitly defined as 50 volts or lower;
- (2) Only electrical licenses or electrical permits are prohibited for wireless systems;
- (3) Individuals who install wireless systems must comply with state laws governing security system technicians;
- (4) Wireless security system operators and users comply with any local alarm business registration and alarm system registration laws; and
- (5) Wireless systems must meet the appropriate building codes wherever installed.

Specifying the voltage level and type of license or permit involved makes certain that the bill narrowly addresses wireless systems that do not necessitate electrical work or technicians. Requiring that security system technicians, wireless alarm businesses, and wireless alarm systems be properly registered as required under local laws safeguards residents from predatory operators and local governments from the resource-draining impacts of false alarm calls.

These amendments provide clarity to vague provisions and protect the safety of county residents, while setting a framework to appropriately regulate wireless security systems. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE with AMENDMENTS** report on HB 645.

Amendments

Amendment No. 1

On page 2, in line 5, after "IS", insert "**50 VOLTS OR LESS AND**"

Amendment No. 2

On page 2:

In line 13, strike "A LICENSE OR PERMIT", replace with "**AN ELECTRICAL LICENSE OR AN ELECTRICAL PERMIT**".

In line 14-15, strike "INCLUDING A LICENSE TO PERFORM ELECTRICAL WORK."

Amendment No. 3

On page 2, after line 15, insert,

"(C) WIRELESS SECURITY SYSTEMS ARE NOT EXEMPT FROM TITLE 18. SECURITY SYSTEMS TECHNICIANS.

(D) A LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAY:

(1) REQUIRE A PERSON WHO PROVIDES WIRELESS SECURITY SYSTEMS TO COMPLY WITH A LOCAL ALARM ORDINANCE OR TO OBTAIN AN ALARM BUSINESS REGISTRATION OR PERMIT.

(2) REQUIRE A PERSON WHO OPERATES A WIRELESS SECURITY SYSTEM OR CAUSES A WIRELESS SECURITY SYSTEM TO BE OPERATED, TO COMPLY WITH A LOCAL ALARM ORDINANCE OR OBTAIN AN ALARM SYSTEM REGISTRATION OR PERMIT."

Amendment No. 4

(X) WIRELESS SECURITY SYSTEMS MUST MEET ANY REQUIRED STATE AND LOCAL BUILDING CODES.