



House Bill 711

*State Board of Plumbing – State Plumbing Code –
Adoption of the International Plumbing and Fuel Gas Codes*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

Date: March 15, 2016

To: Economic Matters Committee

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr. & Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 711. The bill would limit local autonomy and does not address any systemic problem or weakness with the State's current plumbing code.

HB 711 requires the State Board of Plumbing to adopt as the State Plumbing Code the 2015 International Plumbing Code (IPC) and International Fuel Gas Code and any subsequent versions published by the International Code Commission. The Board may adopt regulations to amend limited sections of the State Plumbing Code if the plumbing industry presents information to the Board regarding better and safer plumbing materials and installation practices.

Currently, the State Board has adopted the National Standard Plumbing Code (NSPC) as the State Code but may choose to adopt another standardized code as it sees fit. Counties may either adopt the State Code or adopt a local code that is equal to or more stringent than the State Code. Fourteen counties use the NSPC or an amended variant, while 10 have adopted the IPC or an amended variant.

This bill is unnecessary. There are no systemic issues with either the implementation or enforcement of the State Plumbing Code or local plumbing codes. The State Board has the authority to amend or adopt a new code as needed. The current system works and allows for adequate local flexibility to adopt a code that best meets their local conditions and needs while still ensuring safe and functioning plumbing systems.

HB 711 would force counties to adopt the IPC when there is no need. This reduces local autonomy and despite the fiscal note indicating a minimal cost to counties, there will be a cost for those counties that use the NSPC to adopt a new code and retrain their code enforcement personnel.

HB 711 is unnecessary and would reduce local autonomy. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 711 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.