



House Bill 873

Workers' Compensation – Public Safety Employees

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Economic Matters Committee

Date: March 1, 2013

From: Leslie Knapp Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 873. As introduced, the bill would expand the workers' compensation public safety occupational heart disease and hypertension presumptions to include all deputy sheriffs. The bill would also expand an enhanced public safety employee benefit for certain permanent partial disability injuries to include all deputy sheriffs and Allegany County Correctional Officers.

MACo understands that the bill's sponsor plans to offer an amendment that would remove the presumption provisions from the bill. MACo continues to have longstanding concerns regarding the application, rebuttability, cost, and causal nexus of the public safety occupational disease presumptions and continues to advocate for a scientific and legal review of Maryland's presumption laws.

Regarding the bill's enhanced benefits provisions, MACo notes that the deputy sheriffs that would be added under the bill do not regularly perform the same law enforcement duties as police officers but instead more typically fulfill the constitutional duties of their office. The bill would also increase the liability and potential costs of the affected jurisdictions. The actual increase would be contingent on the number of claims filed. It should be the option of each individual county whether to grant the enhanced benefit to its deputy sheriffs.

In conclusion, HB 873 would expand the enhanced benefit to public safety officials that have different law enforcement duties than police officers and increase the potential liabilities and costs of affected counties. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 873 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.