



House Bill 910

Water Quality Certification – Conowingo Dam – Required Studies

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environmental Matters Committee

Date: March 5, 2014

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 910. The bill would provide important and needed information regarding the impact of sediment behind the Conowingo Dam on the Chesapeake Bay and potential ideas on how to address the issue.

The bill would require an applicant seeking a water quality certificate as part of the Conowingo Dam relicensing process to fund certain studies that are due to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) by May 31, 2017. The studies must determine: (1) the composition and impact of the sediment trapped behind the Conowingo Dam on the Chesapeake Bay; (2) the costs and benefits of managing the sediment; (3) methods of reducing flooding downstream of the Dam; and (4) any other issue MDE considers appropriate based on the result of a study being conducted by the United State Army Corps of Engineers and MDE.

MACo believes that the Conowingo Dam is an important piece (although not the only piece) in the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load “puzzle” and has supported the ongoing efforts of the State and the Chesapeake Bay Commission to address the Dam’s impact on the main stem of the Bay and certain Bay tributaries.

HB 910 represents a reasonable request to have the applicant, the energy generation company Exelon, fund the needed studies. Exelon is already required to provide significant information as part of its relicensing process with both the State and federal governments. The studies would help provide the information necessary for all involved stakeholders to make informed decisions on how to address the water pollution challenges posed by the Conowingo Dam. Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue a report of **FAVORABLE** for HB 910.