



BILL NO.: House Bill 931

TITLE: Department of Planning – State Development Plan – Approval by the General Assembly

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 8, 2012

COMMITTEE: Environmental Matters

CONTACT: Leslie Knapp Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 931. The bill would create an oversight role for the General Assembly with respect to the State Development Plan (Plan). HB 931 provides that the Plan may not be finalized until approved by the General Assembly. The General Assembly may also modify the Plan.

MACo is not inherently opposed to the concept of a Plan, but has serious concerns about the Plan's potential scope and effect and is supportive of legislation that would better clarify and define its scope. Since the authority of the Executive Branch to create the Plan derives from an act of the General Assembly (Title 5, Subtitle 6 of the State Finance and Procurement Article) and all significant policy changes relating to land use have gone through the General Assembly, MACo believes it is proper for the General Assembly to exercise some level of control or oversight of the Plan, to better enhance the opportunities for public participation and clearer accountability for its policies.

HB 931 does not repeal the existing Plan but instead creates a reasonable oversight role for the General Assembly. Just as a local governing body approves its jurisdiction's comprehensive plan, it is only sensible that the General Assembly have a similar role regarding the State's Plan. Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 931.