



## House Bill 1250

*Ethics - Lobbying Regulation – Associations Representing  
Counties or Municipal Corporations*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environmental Matters Committee

Date: March 4, 2014

From: Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 1250. This bill would require a range of government employees and representatives to follow needless State ethics regulations currently applicable to registered private lobbyists.

Current Maryland law properly recognizes the basic differences between public sector representatives and private lobbyists. State, county, and municipal officials and employees are routinely – and appropriately – sought by policymakers for input on administrative, implementation, and enforcement issues. The General Assembly and its staff regularly rely on government agencies and associations for insight into its fiscal and policy notes, budget analyses, and other reports. This government-to-government relationship is distinct from outside actors, for whom the tracing of client relationships and monetary interests may serve an important public need.

HB 1250 misinterprets the role of governments, especially local governments, in the policy process. County officials and employees should be welcomed into the policymaking process for their insight and expertise. Association staff, essentially representing jurisdictions without the means to employ staff for these focused purposes, should be similarly recognized. At the federal level, a similar distinction has applied for decades. Under the bill, even county elected and appointed officials who join Annapolis policy discussions on behalf of MACo could be obliged to register just as are multi-client professional lobbyists. The employees of MACo, whose clearly defined membership is unambiguous, would similarly be captured.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 1250.