# House Bill 1408

*Local Jurisdictions – Historic Preservation Standards – Prevention of Lethal and Life-Threatening Nontidal Flooding*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

Date: February 28, 2018

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1408. The bill provides greater flexibility to county governments to address dangerous and repetitive nontidal flooding within specified historic districts.

HB 1408 authorizes the legislative body of a local government to allow a deviation from historic preservation standards for a "qualified historic district" in order to prevent and reduce the risk of lethal and life-threatening nontidal flooding. The bill defines "qualified historic district" as a locally designated historic district in which: (1) nontidal flooding has resulted in a demonstrable threat to the life and safety of individuals or the death of an individual; and (2) four or more repetitive loss properties are located.

Maryland is a state rich in history and county governments are protective of our designated historic areas, such as Ellicott City. However, many of these historic areas were built at a time when concerns over stormwater management were minimal or non-existent. In areas subject to repetitive, nontidal flooding, the lack of proper stormwater infrastructure can lead to losses of property and in extreme cases, human life.

The bill allows a county government to waive the normally strict historical preservation standards in order to install modern stormwater and flood management systems that can help minimize the risk to life and property during a flooding event. The bill's scope is limited to historic districts with a proven history of nontidal flooding issues.

HB 1408 provides a narrow exception to historic preservation standards so that a county can address valid public safety and property concerns posed by repetitive nontidal flooding. Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee give HB 1408 a **FAVORABLE** recommendation.