



## House Bill 1495

### *Public School Construction Assessment and Maintenance Reform Act*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 8, 2018

From: Robin Clark Eilenberg

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 1495 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This legislation would require the Interagency Committee on School Construction to develop educational facilities sufficiency standards and a facility condition index and use the index to rank all of Maryland's public schools.

#### *School Funding Priorities Are a Local Decision – And Should Stay That Way*

Local control of priorities for school construction funding must be maintained, and not lost to a statewide calculation of facility conditions and repair costs. School boards, together with county governments, are best situated to know local needs and priorities and to respond to citizen interests and local conditions. This bill would establish a statewide index and ranking that could not possibly take into account the factors local officials are trusted to understand and apply in their school construction priorities.

Use of a statewide facility condition index to rank facilities, as described in this bill, could also influence State funding decisions. Funding decisions based on this sort of ranking threaten to override local insight into needs and priorities. Decisions based on such a ranking could also have the unintended consequence of penalizing those school boards and counties who best protect investments through positive maintenance practices.

HB 1495 will contribute to the understanding of statewide school construction needs through a statewide facility assessment. However, the bill's requirement to develop a facility condition index and ranking may have negative consequences. As needs are assessed, the ability of local governments to guide school construction funding priorities must be preserved. For this reason, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 1495.