



BILL NO.: Senate Bill 126

TITLE: Department of Natural Resources – Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

DATE: January 31, 2012

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

CONTACT: Leslie Knapp Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 126 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill would require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to consult with local governments as it prepares the Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (LPRP). Additional amendments being offered by DNR would also clarify that the Maryland Plan and local land preservation and recreation plans must be done on a five-year cycle in order to better qualify for federal funds.

HB 1025 of 2011 transferred the responsibility of doing the LPRP from the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to DNR. Traditionally, MDP has consulted with local governments regarding the LPRP and MACo supports codification of this practice. Additionally, MACo has no objections to moving the LPRP and the local plans from a 6 to a 5-year cycle. The lack of objection is predicated on an acknowledgement by DNR that the local government comprehensive planning and zoning cycle, which plays a significant role in the creation of the local plans, remains on a 6-year cycle.

With the proposed DNR amendments, SB 126 codifies the existing practice of consulting with local governments for the LPRP and better synchronizes the LPRP schedule with federal funding criteria. Commensurate with recognition by DNR that local governments remain on a 6-year planning and zoning cycle, MACo recommends the Committee issue a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** on SB 126.