



Senate Bill 132

Speed Monitoring Systems – Local Designees – Hearing and Approval

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: February 4, 2015

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 132. The bill would intrude on local government personnel decisions and processes and its provisions were previously considered and rejected by the General Assembly.

For local jurisdictions that choose to enact a speed camera program, the bill would require that the designation of a speed camera program “ombudsman” be subject to the approval of the governing body of the local jurisdiction following a public hearing. Under current law, the ombudsman shall respond to questions or concerns about the jurisdiction’s speed camera program and has the power to review and void speed camera citations prior to the citations being heard in court.

As a general principle, MACo believes that local governments should be able to make their own personnel decisions, including hiring and designation processes. There is no compelling reason for the State to enact an arbitrary process requirement in this instance.

Furthermore, the General Assembly has already considered and rejected the notion of requiring a local governing body’s approval of the ombudsman. SB 350 and HB 929 of 2014 instituted many reasonable speed camera reforms, including the creation of the ombudsman. The bills were crafted over two years and passed with bipartisan support. They were also supported by MACo, the Maryland Municipal League, and AAA Mid-Atlantic. During last year’s debate of the bills, the idea of requiring local governing body approval of the ombudsman was proposed and ultimately amended out of the bills prior to their passage.

SB 132 would unnecessarily intrude on the ability of a local government to determine its own personnel processes and has already been considered and rejected by the General Assembly in 2014. Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report for SB 132.