MARYLAND Association of COUNTIES

Senate Bill 136

Vehicle Laws – Parking Violations – Authority of Political Subdivisions

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: January 25, 2017

From: Barbara Zektick

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 136. The bill prohibits a local government from increasing a penalty, assessing a fee or late charge, or referring for collection an unpaid parking citation within 30 days after issuance of the citation.

Parking enforcement is a purely local matter. It is properly within the purview of local governments to enforce parking regulations, and to determine the most appropriate terms for parking enforcement which best balance minimizing burden on constituents with the need to deter illegal behavior. Parking violations can severely compromise quality of life for residents and visitors, and it is an important responsibility of local governments to enforce those laws in a manner that deters behavior without creating undue burden on those responsible for paying citations. This bill diminishes local government authority to determine how to reach that balance in a way that most appropriately serves their unique constituencies. Parking enforcement is by its nature a local issue, and current laws treating it as such should remain unchanged.

Some jurisdictions currently assess late fees sooner than the mandate in SB 136, including Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Montgomery County. Those jurisdictions provide constituents the abilities to pay parking citations online, in person, by phone, and by mail. Additionally, parking fine recipients always have the option to elect to stand trial and postpone payment, pending the outcome. Removing this authority from these counties could result in a fiscal impact of millions of dollars – eroding resources for essential public services.

This bill denies local governments the authority to enforce laws and collect revenues in a manner most appropriate to their individual jurisdictions. Accordingly, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 136 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.