



Senate Bill 291

Maryland Environmental Service – Collective Bargaining

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Finance Committee

Date: February 16, 2017

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 291. The bill would undermine the ability of the Maryland Environmental Service (MES) to deliver needed environmental services to local governments at a reasonable cost.

SB 291 would require MES to recognize and deal with an employee organization that is elected as an exclusive representative of MES employees and collectively bargain.

As noted on the MES website (www.menv.com), MES is a self-supporting fee-for-service agency that “provides services at competitive rates to government and private sector clients and works on projects including water and wastewater treatment, solid waste management, composting, recycling, dredged material management, hazardous materials cleanup, storm water services and renewable energy.” Maryland counties and municipalities are major MES clients and in FY 2016, MES did \$54.4 million in business with local governments. This represented 34% of MES’ total income for that year.

As the bill’s fiscal note indicates, MES estimates it will likely have to charge an additional \$1.5 to \$4.1 million annually to local governments as a result of mandatory collective bargaining. This would undermine the unique role MES plays in assisting local governments to meet numerous federal and state environmental mandates.

SB 291 would apply mandatory collective bargaining rights to an independent State agency that provides many critical and low-cost services to county and municipal governments. The bill would increase local costs and potentially jeopardize the role of MES in providing these services. For these reasons, MACo recommends an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 291.