



Senate Bill 352

Maryland Health Care Commission – Certificate of Need Review – Interested Party

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Date: March 24, 2016

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 352 as it provides a means for counties to ensure the health needs of their residents are appropriately met.

In Maryland, Certificate of Need (CON) applications are required when there are certain changes to an existing health care facility or the development of a new facility. The CON is intended to ensure that new health care facilities are developed only as needed and that health care facilities are cost-effective, high quality, and geographically and financially accessible. It also helps to ensure that facilities are financially viable and do not have a negative impact on other health care facilities. Interested parties may submit written and oral testimony to the Maryland Health Care Commission before it takes final action on a CON application.

SB 352 expands the definition of “interested parties” for CON applications in cases where there is a review of a replacement health care facility proposed by or on behalf of regional health systems. In those cases, a neighboring jurisdiction would now be considered an interested party if it does not contain a proposed replacement health care facility but is served by the facility under review. These jurisdictions currently have no voice in the matter.

This bill affords counties whose residents would be affected by changes to a regional health care facility with an opportunity to have a say in the process. As a reasonable proxy for citizen input, those counties would be able to provide support for needed change or raise concerns about adverse impacts. It also reasonably limits interested party status to contiguous jurisdictions.

SB 352 provides a sensible means for counties whose populations are served by health care facilities to have a say in regional CON cases. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 352.