



Senate Bill 379

Creation of a State Debt - Qualified Zone Academy Bonds

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

Date: February 24, 2016

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

From: Robin Clark Eilenberg, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 379. This bill would authorize the Board of Public Works to issue \$4,680,000 in Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs) by December 31, 2016, and grant the money to the Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The money would be used for certain development or improvement purposes including the renovation, repair, and capital improvements of qualified schools in accordance with criteria established under the Aging Schools Program. The IAC would award the money through competitively-awarded grants and MSDE would provide targeted grants to eligible schools under the Breakthrough Center Program.

MACo has supported and will continue to support additional funding for our schools, including the QZAB, and the Aging Schools and Breakthrough Center Programs. These programs fill an important niche by covering projects that would not normally qualify as true capital projects eligible for general obligation bond (GO) funding. The counties, who share responsibility with the State for Maryland's schools, appreciate financial support for their infrastructure goals.

Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 379.