



Senate Bill 474

Ethics – Local Public Ethics Commissions and Entities – Meeting and Reporting Requirements

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 8, 2018

To: Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee
From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 474 WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill would require a local ethics commission (or the appropriate entity) to meet at least three times a year and file an annual report with the local governing body and members of the General Assembly who represent that jurisdiction. The reports must provide an overview of the local ethics law and the activities of the local ethics commission.

MACo believes the annual reporting requirements further local government transparency and openness and would not place an undue fiscal or administrative strain on the local ethics commission. However, MACo would offer an amendment to require the ethics commission to meet at least once a year instead of three times a year.

Unless a jurisdiction is facing an ethics issues or considering changing its ethics laws, there may be no need for a local commission to meet more than once a year. Requiring additional meetings that may not be required is both inefficient and wasteful. MACo has worked with the bill's sponsor and believes the sponsor is supportive of this amendment.

SB 474 seeks to improve the accountability and transparency of local ethics commissions. While the reporting requirements are reasonable, MACo believes requiring the commissions to meet at least once a year is more productive and reasonable than requiring more meetings that may not be needed or necessary.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give SB 474 a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**.

MACo Proposed Amendment to SB 474

On page 2, in line 2, strike “THREE TIMES” and substitute “ONE TIME”.