



**MARYLAND ASSOCIATION  
OF COUNTIES, INC.**

---

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 602

TITLE: Public Safety – Building Performance Standards – Automatic Sprinkler Systems

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

DATE: March 30, 2012

COMMITTEE: Environmental Matters

CONTACT: Leslie Knapp Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 602. As amended, the bill prohibits a local jurisdiction from adopting local amendments to the Maryland Building Performance Standards (MBPS) if the amendments weaken automatic sprinkler system requirements for townhomes or one- and two-family residential homes.

SB 602 would broadly restrict the ability of a local government to make even the most reasonable amendment to their building codes related to sprinkler systems. Some jurisdictions will see an increase in inspection and training costs to manage new MBPS standards that do not currently apply in that jurisdiction. The bill will also lead to an increase in home prices in certain rural areas as the lack of adequate water pressure will require the installation of expensive pressurization tanks, likely affecting the availability of affordable housing.

MACo is not opposed to reasonable building safety standards but SB 602 is overbroad and would unnecessarily penalize certain rural areas of the State. The bill would also disproportionately affect housing costs in some rural jurisdictions. Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 602.