



Senate Bill 640

Municipalities and Counties – Local Roads – Regulation of Travel by Heavy-Weight Vehicles

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: February 22, 2017

From: Barbara Zektick

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) SUPPORTS SB 640. The bill would authorize certain counties to regulate and permit heavy-weight vehicles on their own roads. It amends existing law (Local Government Article, Section 12-527) which addresses Allegany, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, St Mary's and Washington Counties.

Counties should have the authority to reasonably regulate traffic on the roads they have responsibility for owning and maintaining. First, it is important to note that counties and municipalities own and maintain 83 percent of the road miles in Maryland – and their coffers bear the expense of maintenance for all of those roads. Yet, regulation of heavy-weight vehicles generally falls under the purview of the State Highway Administration in existing law.

County roads are often not built to sustain significant traffic from heavy-weight vehicles – unlike state and interstate highways. As such, local governments should have a say in when and how those roads are used by the heavy-weight traffic which most threatens their state of repair. Notably, under Sections 24-109 and 24-113.2 of the Transportation Article, heavy-weight vehicular travel is often restricted or prevented on interstate highways – effectively forcing those vehicles onto the local roads least equipped to hold them. This bill ensures that those jurisdictions responsible for the infrastructure used by heavy-weight vehicles have authority to reasonably regulate them, allowing local governments to continue to maintain their roadway networks for all drivers.

As counties continue to suffer the repercussions of devastating cutbacks to their highway user revenues, it becomes increasingly important for local governments to have control over their roads to prevent them from falling into a state of irreversible disrepair. When heavy-weight vehicles continue to repeatedly use local roads instead of state and interstate highways, they compromise the integrity of infrastructure oftentimes not built to accommodate such traffic on a regular basis. When left unregulated, heavy-weight traffic can cause extraordinary damage to local roads and any utilities existing underneath or adjacent to them. This problem is only exacerbated by the fact that local governments lack access to any significant portion of transportation revenues to fund maintenance of their roadway networks.

SB 640 gives counties the authority to regulate traffic on the roads they are responsible for maintaining. Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee give SB 640 a **FAVORABLE** report.