



Senate Bill 752

State Highway Administration – Policy Concerning Sound Barriers Along Highways

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: March 2, 2016

From: Andrea E. Mansfield

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 752. This bill would require the State Highway Administration (SHA), in collaboration with county governments, to develop and adopt by regulation a policy concerning sound barriers along highways in the state. This collaborative approach would provide for greater community input and allow local jurisdictions to work jointly with the Administration to address noise concerns from shared constituents.

SHA currently has a Highway Noise Policy and investigates highway traffic noise levels for communities next to existing State highways, in areas where new highways are being constructed, and in areas where highways are being expanded. When determining the placement of sound barriers, SHA considers a number of factors such as acoustics, safety, the opinions of residents, and cost effectiveness. Considering the effects on the local community, an approach that engages the counties to develop a collaborative process for the placement of sound barriers along highways, seems to be more appropriate.

SB 752 promotes this type of collaboration and encourages SHA and the counties to work together to develop a sound barrier policy that meets state and local needs. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 752 and urges the Committee to give the bill a **FAVORABLE** report.