



Senate Bill 877

Waterway Improvement Fund – Public Boating Construction Projects – Financing Limits

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 19, 2019

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 877. The bill updates outdated financing limits within the Waterway Improvement Fund for public boating construction projects.

The Fund is administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to finance projects and activities that benefit public boating. Such projects can include boat ramps and access facilities, shore erosion projects, and navigation markers. Currently, a local government can only access monies from the Fund for a public boating project if the local government provides a 50% or greater matching contribution. Additionally, the Fund cannot contribute more than \$100,000 to a single project.

SB 877 removes the 50% contribution cap and increases the maximum amount the Fund can contribute for a project from \$100,000 to \$250,000. The bill does not alter the annual appropriation from the Fund for projects (a proposed \$13.5 million for FY 2020).

The repeal of the 50% contribution cap allows counties with fewer resources to more easily access the Fund for worthy public boating projects. Increasing the maximum contribution from \$100,000 to \$250,000 is needed in recognition of rising construction costs. The current \$100,000 limit now causes many projects to be delayed or even canceled due to the need for additional local funding.

SB 877 provides a needed update to the Waterway Improvement Fund that would allow a local government to better utilize the Fund for public boating projects while not creating a new fiscal burden for the State. Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee give SB 877 a **FAVORABLE** report.