



Senate Bill 1102

Worcester County - Ocean City Convention Center - Beer and Wine Tasting License

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee

Date: March 14, 2017

From: Kevin Kinnally and Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 1102. This bill would authorize a limited-scope license for beer and wine tasting at the Ocean City Convention Center, for certain events promoting Maryland-based products.

For the last four years, MACo has offered a “Taste of Maryland” reception as part of its annual summer conference in Ocean City. The event has grown to nearly 1,000 guests, and has gained popularity as a venue for our jurisdictions to showcase their many food and drink options. The event is a “sampling” event, where small portions of food, snacks, and wine have proven very popular with attendees who may not otherwise learn about the many offerings from across Maryland.

Current liquor laws apparently do not allow this event to feature Maryland-brewed beer in the same fashion as wine, and this has kept local breweries from participating in this once-a-year event. SB 1102 does not seek to upend the overall balance the General Assembly has struck regarding the two industries, but simply seeks to afford the same opportunity to showcase beer and wine at this limited type of event. SB 1102 only applies to events at the Ocean City Convention Center (itself a license holder), and only for events promoting Maryland products for “tasting” purposes.

SB 1102 will help expand and complete the mission of a valuable event, seeking to promote the beneficial efforts of Maryland’s foodmakers, wineries, and breweries. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 1102 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.