



Senate Bill 687

State and Local Housing Programs – Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Education, Health and Environmental
Affairs Committee

Date: February 9, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 687 WITH AMENDMENTS**. As written, the bill contains several burdensome reporting and assessment requirements for local governments. MACo hopes to work toward bill amendments, seeking to accomplish the bill's essential goals while reducing much of this administrative difficulty.

SB 687 contains detailed reporting requirements for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and local jurisdictions regarding housing accessibility and financial assistance, in addition to a very detailed assessment to be completed before further funding will be provided by the department, or during the next comprehensive plan cycle in 2022. It is likely that much of the required work will fall to local governments, which the Department will combine to prepare a statewide report. The data collection will be time-consuming and burdensome for counties, who already have limited resources in planning and housing departments.

Additionally, the bill would require the development of an established policy on affordable and fair housing at the county level to identify the goals and objectives necessary to take meaningful actions that will "affirmatively further fair housing," and the metrics with which counties would measure them. This assessment will resource demanding for local jurisdictions. If local jurisdictions cannot meet the demands of the bill, then they are not eligible for certain DHCD funding, which could serve to harm the jurisdictions with limited resources – the communities that need this funding the most.

MACo would like to work with the sponsor and the Committee to remove the penalty provisions in the bill and limit the burden on local government. Accordingly, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for SB 687.