



Senate Bill 273

Environment – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions and Requirements

(George “Walter” Taylor Act)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations
Committee

Date: March 30, 2022

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 273. The bill provides increased restrictions on the sale and use of class B fire-fighting foam that contains intentionally added per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS chemicals”). MACo worked with the Senate and House sponsors on amendments to develop a class B fire-fighting foam takeback program for local fire departments.

SB 273 prohibits the sale or use of PFAS foam after January 1, 2023, and outlines stricter disposal requirements. MACo is informed by local firefighting departments that the cost of foam without PFAS is becoming increasingly cost-competitive compared to foam with added PFAS chemicals. Some firefighting departments have an existing stock of previously purchased foam that may not be used up prior to the implementation of the ban. The bill includes a takeback program that allows local departments to hand over any remaining class B fire-fighting foam to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). This new program will help to hasten local departments transition to PFAS free foams; ending local firefighters’ exposure to these cancer-causing chemicals and ceasing a source of pollution.

Counties are in agreement that now is the right time to transition away from PFAS chemicals. SB 273 seeks to protect local firefighters while providing the resources to do it. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a report of **FAVORABLE** for SB 273.