



Senate Bill 405

Outdoor Lighting - Standards and Use of State Funds

MACo Position:

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Date: February 20, 2024

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) offers the following **LETTER OF INFORMATION** regarding SB 405. As drafted, this bill would place certain limitations on the types of lights that can be used at state facilities and directs the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish certain lighting standards.

While initially limited to state facilities and buildings, SB 405 may affect county projects as a result of the lighting standards developed by MDE. Counties recognize the bill's intent of ensuring certain lighting does not interfere with animal populations. In this era of climate change, it is important to better harmonize infrastructure with broader environmental forces, but it is also worth noting that the proposed 3000-Kelvin standard would have significant public safety implications.

Simply put, the higher the Kelvin-rating, the clearer road obstructions, hazards, other vehicles, and pedestrians appear. At athletic fields and in other circumstances, 4000-7500 Kelvin or more may be necessary for visibility and safety. By mandating a standard lower than what is typically used in certain cases, the state could potentially be putting our mutual constituents' safety at risk.

Counties ask that if the Committee does move forward with SB 405, that they give due consideration to the broader public safety and infrastructure considerations - especially those regarding transportation and recreation.