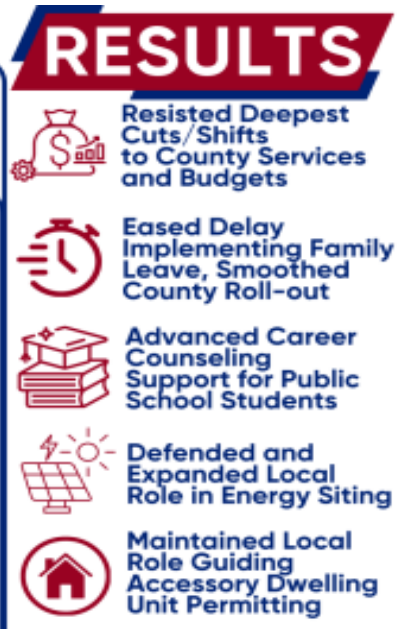
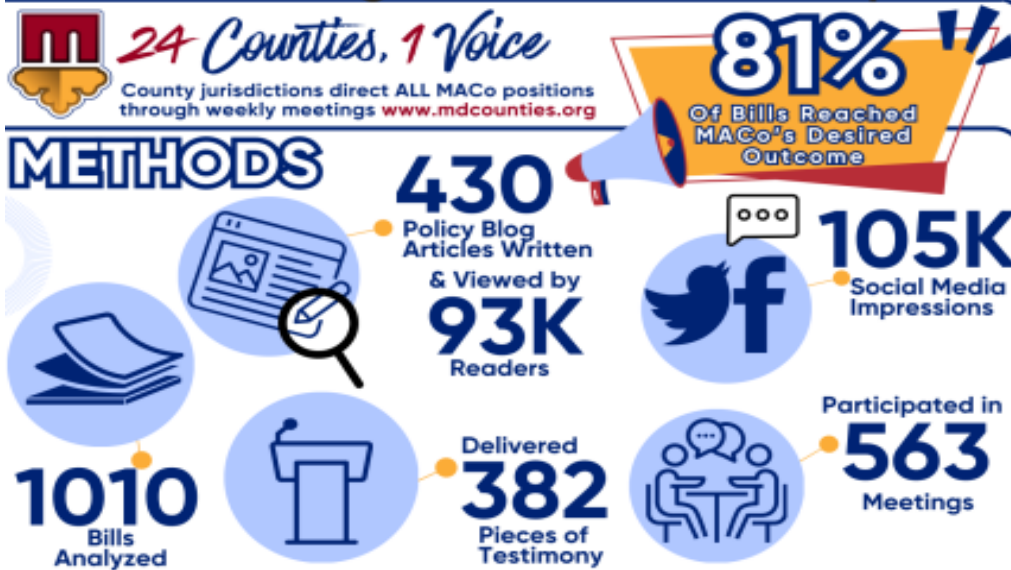


Maryland Association of Counties (MACo)

Jack Wilson, Queen Anne's County Commissioner and 2025 MACo President

Michael Sanderson, MACo Executive Director

MACo 2025 Legislative Session Snapshot



Some Good Outcomes	Some Hard-Fought Compromises	Some Lingering Issues
Local autonomy respected in land use issues, despite heavy pressure to intrude	County budgets avoid the worst cuts, but still take hits as a part of State budget plan	Fiscal uncertainty still high, potential for more cuts/shifts still looming (Fall special session?)
Career counseling programs remain supported for future years – important win	State legislation on solar development reaches middle ground – some gains, some concessions	Local revenue structures still lack modern elements – support still hard to find in Senate
Family leave mandate rolled back, with clarity that county “private plans” won’t have to make advance payment	Limited action on Blueprint, conversation points toward more attention following scheduled “audit” soon	Compromise plan for supporting incarcerated individuals treatment stalled (again) but stakeholders aligned behind one good option



2025 Officers and Executive Committee of MACo's Board of Directors



Jack Wilson

2025 President, MACo
Commissioner
Queen Anne's County



MC Keegan-Ayer

First Vice President, MACo
Council Member
Frederick County



Lenny Pfeffer

Second Vice President, MACo
Council President
Dorchester County



Paul Edwards

Secretary, MACo
Chair, Board of Commissioners
Garrett County



Stuart Pittman

Treasurer, MACo
County Executive
Anne Arundel County

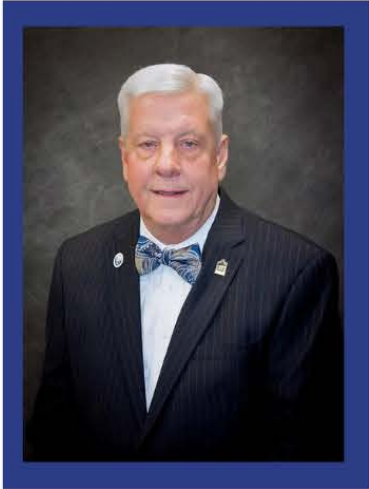


Calvin Ball

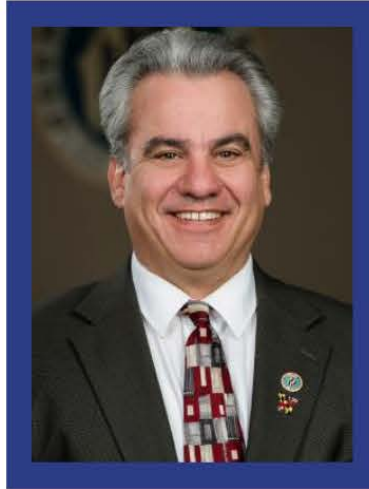
Past President, MACo
County Executive
Howard County



2025 Members of MACo's Board of Directors



John Barr
Commissioner President
Washington County



Chip Bertino
Commissioner
Worcester County



Aisha N. Braveboy
County Executive
Prince George's County



Bob Cassilly
County Executive
Harford County



Reuben Collins II, Esq.
Commissioner President
Charles County



Marc Elrich
County Executive
Montgomery County



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

2025 Members of MACo's Board of Directors



Julie M. Giordano
County Executive
Wicomico County



Sharon Green Middleton
Council Vice President
Baltimore City



James (Randy) Guy
President, Commissioners of
St. Mary's County



Craig Mathies
Commissioner
Somerset County

FY 26 State Budget Cuts to Counties

2025 Session Bottom Line:

*County cuts and shifts remained a part of State budget plan,
but additional reductions were considered
and rejected based on county advocacy*

County	County Cuts/Shifts	Additional Cuts/Shifts
	Passed in 2025	Rejected
Allegany	-1,938,585	-3,660,073
Anne Arundel	-11,723,889	-7,539,397
Baltimore City	-15,941,926	-17,773,519
Baltimore	-14,579,221	-7,720,366
Calvert	-2,018,023	-1,228,672
Caroline	-1,051,367	-1,813,474
Carroll	-3,219,926	-3,463,284
Cecil	-1,752,614	-4,695,459
Charles	-3,399,148	-2,045,793
Dorchester	-936,978	-1,753,857
Frederick	-6,719,780	-5,219,072
Garrett	-733,629	-1,254,287
Harford	-4,584,465	-6,548,878
Howard	-7,855,963	-5,953,825
Kent	-277,264	-65,525
Montgomery	-23,981,766	-18,812,222
Prince George's	-20,450,020	-10,731,345
Queen Anne's	-906,406	-548,071
St. Mary's	-1,993,148	-2,604,151
Somerset	-651,595	-1,269,575
Talbot	-629,101	-340,059
Washington	-2,941,717	-7,060,546
Wicomico	-2,906,936	-6,121,307
Worcester	-1,280,445	-1,292,440
Actual Total	-132,473,912	-119,515,193

*Includes shifted costs of
pensions, assessments,
grant elimination*

*Includes additional pension costs,
income tax effects avoided, Program
Open Space estimated reductions*

Estimates by MACo, with data from the MD Department of Legislative Services



[#MACoCon Recap: Cyberattack “Hot Wash” – Lessons Learned After Things Went Wrong](#)

Post author: [Kevin Kinnally](#) | Post published: August 20, 2025 | Post category: [Cyber](#) / [Emergency Management](#) / [Information Technology](#) / [Summer Conference](#)

At the MACo Summer Conference, state, local, and federal leaders came together for a candid discussion on the realities of cyber threats facing county governments.

The Summer Conference session, *The Cyberattack “Hot Wash” – Lessons Learned After Things Went Wrong*, examined firsthand experiences with cyber incidents and practical strategies for prevention, response, and recovery.

State Delegate Vaughn Stewart moderated the panel, guiding an engaging conversation on navigating cyberattacks, protecting critical systems, and ensuring continuity of public services when things go wrong.

Panel speakers included:

- Christine Anderson, Chief Administrative Officer, Anne Arundel County
- Robert Kelly, Chief Information Officer, St. Mary's County
- Steven Burke, Local Cyber Manager, Maryland Department of Information Technology
- John Garstka, Director, Cyber Warfare, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense

Christine Anderson opened with lessons drawn from a recent cyber incident in Anne Arundel County. She emphasized the importance of clear and consistent communication, close coordination with legal counsel and technical advisors, and avoiding speculation until facts are confirmed. Anderson also highlighted strict adherence to Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) rules, underscoring the need to balance transparency with security during response.

Robert Kelly recalled St. Mary's County's 2016 Thanksgiving weekend cyberattack, when hackers attempted to cripple more than 100 servers in a coordinated global strike. Kelly detailed how his IT team — through rapid response, long hours, and no small amount of luck — managed to thwart the attack without paying ransom. His story illustrated both the vulnerabilities counties face and the critical role of teamwork in crisis response.



Steven Burke provided the DoIT perspective, outlining Maryland's efforts to bolster local cyber resilience. He described resources available to counties, including technical assistance, training, and coordinated state support for cyber incident response. Burke emphasized that local governments are often targeted because of limited staff and budgets, making collaboration essential.

John Garstka brought the federal lens, connecting local challenges to national security priorities. He explained how lessons from defense cyber warfare translate to civilian infrastructure, stressing the importance of building resilient systems and preparing for recovery, not just prevention.



The panel emphasized that cyberattacks on local governments are inevitable. Counties must focus on preparation, strengthen partnerships, and apply lessons from past incidents to keep essential services secure and maintain public trust.

The session took place on Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at the Roland Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, Maryland.



[BPW Approves First Wrongful Conviction Cost Shift Sending \\$300K Bill To Disparity Grant County](#)

Post author: [Sarah Sample](#) | Post published: August 7, 2025 | Post category: [Board of Public Works](#) / [Finance and Procurement](#)

The Board of Public Works (BPW) approved funding for a number of county projects, as well as the first wrongful conviction payment intended to be split with the local county government for a state process they have no control over.

While a number of agenda items were approved to send funding to counties for various projects, much of this was overshadowed by the first BPW vote on compensation for a wrongfully convicted individual, where the county is now required to split the cost with the state. This is the results of provisions in the [2025 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act \(BRFA\)](#) that requires counties to cover 50 percent of State-approved compensation for wrongful incarceration, despite having zero authority over the legal process or outcome.

In the meeting yesterday the board approved the first payment that falls under the new cost sharing structure with local governments, resulting in an almost \$300,000 charge for a jurisdiction considered resource scarce enough to merit disparity grant funding from the state. As covered in a [recent article](#) on *Conduit Street*, these are new costs to local jurisdictions that, due to the nature of the liability, is not able to be budgeted for in advance. This makes it an unpredictable, and often significant charge, that is levied after the local budget has been finalized.





More actions from the Wednesday meeting are outlined below.

Allegany

The Department of Natural Resources to commit a total of **\$118,314** from Program Open Space funding to be allocated to Allegany County for improvements at the Maryland Avenue Ballfield, Luke Legacy Park, and Iron Furnace Park.

Baltimore City

A request from the Maryland Department of the Environment for new grant funding up to **\$10,800,000** to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for environmental restoration practices in the Middle Branch watershed in Baltimore City. The work will focus on restoring aquatic habitat and enhancing shoreline resiliency around the Baltimore Harbor and Patapsco Delta watershed.

Caroline

A request from the Department of Natural Resources to commit **\$694,950** from the Program Open Space funding allocated to Caroline County to plan, design and construct a new baseball field and new softball field with associated irrigation, dugouts, backstop and lighting, a small soccer field, and parking with ADA access at Sharp Road Park.

Carroll

A request from the Department of Natural Resources to commit **\$43,849** from the Program Open Space funding allocated to Carroll County for new LED lighting systems at the New Windsor Skate Park.



Charles

A request to provide a **\$405,494.76 grant** to The County Commissioners of Charles County, from Rural Legacy Funds for the acquisition of a 109-acre conservation easement in the Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Forest Rural Legacy Area (Friedburg property). Acquisition of this easement will protect agricultural and forested land, as well as forested and grassed buffers of approximately 500 linear feet along an unnamed tributary to the Potomac River. The easement will be held by the Grantee. Easement value: \$4,651.15/acre

Queen Anne's

A request to enter into grant agreements for **\$300,000 in grants** to the County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County for the acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, site improvement, and capital equipping of the Crumpton Building. There is no matching fund requirement for this grant. The General Assembly previously approved this funding as part of the 2023 Capital Budget.

Washington

A recommendation from the Department of General Services to grant a one-year extension to the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County from the automatic termination of **\$750,000** in capital grant funds for the planning, design, construction and capital equipping of the renovation and expansion of the Maryland Theatre and the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts (Urban Educational Campus) and for the University System of Maryland at Hagerstown. The grant was not encumbered within the required seven years, but the Grantee, after determining they cannot meet the seven-year deadline before the authorization terminates, has requested a one-year extension to June 1, 2026.

Wicomico

The Board of Public Works approved payment of **\$582,983.80** to Tavon Tull as compensation for erroneous confinement. According to new legislation passed into law during the 2025 legislative session, Wicomico is required to pay half of the amount.



[MACo Files Brief as MD Supreme Court Hears Opioid Case Challenge](#)

Post author: [Sarah Sample](#) | Post published: August 26, 2025 | Post category: [Courts / Government Liability and Courts](#) / [Health and Human Services](#) / [Public Safety and Corrections](#)

The Maryland Association of Counties signed on to an amicus brief in *Express Scripts, Inc., et al. v. Anne Arundel County* regarding public nuisance claims related to the opioid crisis and remediation. The Maryland Supreme Court is set to hear oral arguments on Tuesday, September 9, 2025.

Recently the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) signed on to an [amicus brief](#) in a case involving member county Anne Arundel, and with potentially significant implications for local jurisdictions statewide. The brief was filed in conjunction with the Maryland Municipal League ahead of the Maryland Supreme Court hearing that will consider two questions in relation to the original case brought by Anne Arundel.

The certification of the questions was approved, temporarily halting the case brought by Anne Arundel until the MD Supreme Court weighs in. Oral arguments for the hearing are set for early September 9, where the following two questions will be considered by the court:



1. Under Maryland's common law, can the licensed dispensing of, or the administration of benefits plans for, a medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration give rise to a claim for public nuisance?
2. If so, what are the elements of such a public-nuisance claim, and what types of potential relief can a local government plaintiff seek when asserting such a claim?



The original claims brought by Anne Arundel County against multiple pharmacy benefit managers and distributors of opioids allege that defendants knowingly caused and maintained a public nuisance. The collaborations and partnerships between pharmacy benefit managers and opioid manufacturers were deceptive and dangerous in the marketing of opioids for the purpose of financial gain. These actions spurred on opioid abuse by placing these drugs on formularies with preferred status and without restrictions on their approval for use.

Following the initial filing, defendants contested the grounds for the claim and filed a motion to dismiss the case and made a motion for the certification of two questions to the Supreme Court of Maryland on the matter. The motion to dismiss was denied and the questions were approved for MD Supreme Court consideration. The outcome of the courts deliberation could have significant implications for what is considered a cause of action in a public nuisance case and whether those defined elements set a precedent for additional types of claims not currently common to the judicial process in Maryland.

[Watch MD Supreme Court live webcast on Sept 9th beginning at 9 AM.](#)

[Read the MACo x MML amicus brief.](#)

[Read the full Memorandum from US District Court 4th Circuit Judge Matthew J. Maddox.](#)



[Carroll County Receives Timeline Waiver for Education Funding Compliance](#)

[Sarah Sample](#) | April 29, 2025 | [County Budgets](#) / [Education](#)

During a special meeting of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint) Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), members voted unanimously on Monday to grant Carroll County Public School's (CCPS) request for a waiver. A handful of additional accountability measures were also adopted in the agreement, but, broadly, CCPS now has until FY28 to meet the mandatory funding allocation requirements for compensatory education and multi-language learners across the county.

As [previously covered](#) on *Conduit Street*, CCPS requested a waiver that would extend the timeline for the school system to comply with statutorily required funding distributions under the Blueprint. That request was granted yesterday in a unanimous vote during a [special meeting of the AIB](#).

This will help CCPS avoid what would have been the removal, reduction, or relocation of almost 200 full-time positions and boost class sizes, in some areas, up to 40 students. Additionally, without the waiver, the AIB has the authority to withhold state funding from CCPS due to lack of compliance in accordance with the phased-in timeline.



During the meeting Chairman Isiah "Ike" Leggett expressed satisfaction with the evidence provided by CCPS for the waiver.

"Carroll County is asking for more time to meet the requirement, not to remove the requirement altogether, and has provided valid reasoning for why they need more time to phase in these changes." said AIB Chair Isiah "Ike" Leggett.

Chairman Leggett shared later in the meeting that the process of implementation has illuminated areas of the Blueprint that are more complex than initially anticipated, which further underscores the need to adjust. One of those components, and what was a primary factor in the board's decision, was a decade of declining enrollment in CCPS that was followed by a significant increase in compensatory education enrollment from FY24-25. This student population, that requires more funding than a standard student, grew by 86.3 percent in a single year in Carroll. In contrast, the statewide average, while also high, saw a 33.6 percent increase that same year. Chairman Leggett concluded his remarks by acknowledging that the staffing shifts that would be necessary to achieve compliance by FY26 would be unreasonably disruptive to effective teaching and learning throughout the district.

Additional stipulations on CCPS, that came as a condition of the extended timeline, include:

- coding compensatory education and multi-language learner funding at the school level by February 1, 2026
- acquire approval from the AIB before amending any elements of the compliance plan
- submit FY27 and FY28 budgets to the county government
- provide written updates on progress every 6 months beginning October 1, 2025
- engage in monitoring as deemed necessary

[Read the full AIB press release.](#)



[Deep Dive: Maryland's Pivotal 2025 Actions on Solar Energy Policy](#)

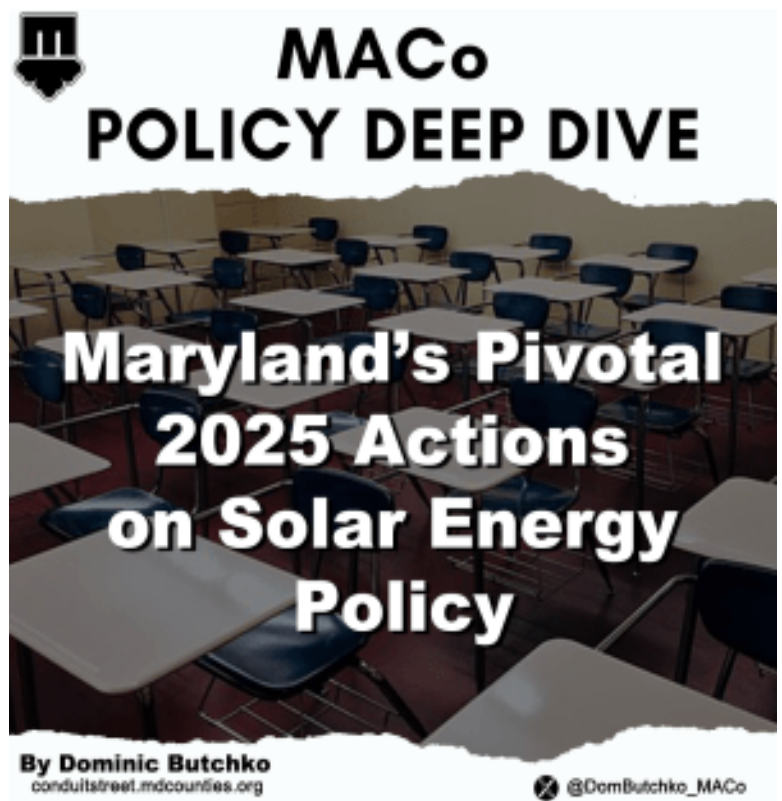
[Dominic Butchko](#) | April 30, 2025 | [Energy](#) / [Environment](#) / [Planning and Zoning](#) / [Policy Deep Dive](#)

This article is part of MACo's Policy Deep Dive series, where expert policy analysts explore and explain the top county policy issues of the day. A new article is added each week – [read all of MACo's Policy Deep Dives](#).

The 2025 legislative session will be remembered as one of the most influential gatherings of the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) in a generation. Legislators faced many consequential and time-sensitive issues, which resulted in difficult decisions and long-lasting impacts, all with the goal of improving quality of life for Marylanders.

Energy policy, in particular, was a central focus. Legislators, special interests, and counties spent months debating and negotiating during the lead-up to Maryland's 90-day General Assembly Session, with final legislation not passing until the closing hours of Sine Die.

As a result, Maryland's energy landscape has shifted significantly, with new policies aiming to re-balance previously competing priorities.



This week's deep dive explores [HB1036/SB931, the Renewable Energy Certainty Act](#), and what it means for counties.



Pre-2025 Landscape

Before the 2025 legislative session, Maryland's energy policy was shaped by ambitious efforts aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions, boosting electrification, and growing community solar. Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standards also set aggressive targets for 2030: 52.5% of statewide energy from renewables, including 14.5% from solar and 13.02% from offshore wind.

However, these statewide ambitions increasingly clashed with local authority. Historically, county governments controlled land use, with limited exceptions like the siting of energy facilities, which fell under the Public Service Commission (PSC) through the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity process. Tensions culminated in the 2019 case *Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland v. Perennial Solar, LLC*, where Maryland courts ruled conclusively that counties were preempted from regulating the siting of energy facilities over 2 megawatts (MW), leaving final approval with the PSC. While the PSC was required to consider local policies and community impacts, it retained ultimate authority.

Solar's vast footprint, unlike traditional "point source" energy generation through power plants, has sparked increasing local opposition, and between 2019 and 2024, counties challenged roughly 100 projects—with the PSC rarely siding against developers. Early missteps in project design further strained relations, and though later improvements helped, the damage to public trust lingered. Meanwhile, rising energy demand—driven by climate policy, electrification, and the booming data center industry in neighboring Virginia—strained Maryland's grid, prompting the PJM regional authority to warn of potential brownouts and blackouts. The MGA convened in January, facing a convergence of environmental, political, and infrastructure pressures.

MGA Leadership Legislative Package

Dozens of bills were introduced that dealt with energy, but the main focus was on the three-bill energy package jointly put forward by the House Speaker and Senate President, joined by the leadership from the two chambers' committees with energy policy jurisdiction. All three bills were amended and passed by the General Assembly and are currently awaiting the Governor's signature. Below is a comprehensive analysis of the particular bill that generated broad interest from county officials, the Renewable Energy Certainty Act.



HB1036/SB931 – [The Renewable Energy Certainty Act](#)

[HB1036 Fiscal Note](#)

The *Board of County Commissioners v. Perennial Solar* decision established state preemption over county authority but left key implementation questions unanswered. For years, counties, communities, and developers navigated unclear and inconsistent PSC decisions. Beginning in the fall of 2023, MACo collaborated with state officials, the solar industry, and environmental groups to draft comprehensive legislation for clarity. Although MACo initially opposed the Renewable Energy Certainty Act (HB1036/SB931) due to major deviations from prior efforts, it shifted to a neutral stance after securing key county priorities through significant amendments. The bill addresses solar, energy storage, and state lands.

Solar

- **Distributed Generation Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, or DG-CPCN** ([pages 3-12](#))

The final bill did incorporate parts of [SB983/HB827](#), which establishes a new expedited DG-CPCN for solar projects between 2MW and 5MW projects. The Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) and the PSC are charged with establishing more stringent design and siting standards. Applicants must demonstrate that they comply with these standards in order to be eligible for this new, faster process. Unlike traditional CPCNs, counties will have to be notified within 30 days of the date of an application as opposed to 90 days. New regulations implementing this new CPCN are set to be promulgated by July 1st, 2027. MACo is actively working with both the PPRP and PSC to help develop strong design and siting standards.

6 (B) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO A SOLAR ENERGY GENERATING
7 STATION THAT:

8 (1) HAS THE CAPACITY TO PRODUCE MORE THAN ~~2~~-MEGAWATTS 1
9 MEGAWATT OF ELECTRICITY AS MEASURED BY THE ALTERNATING CURRENT RATING
10 OF THE ~~SYSTEM'S~~ STATION'S INVERTER;

Reduced Threshold – HB1036/SB931 preempts some local authority in the siting of solar projects. Counties are now preempted down to 1MW.



- **Reduced Threshold** ([Page 13, Lines 6-10](#))

Since the creation of the CPCN process, energy projects above 2MW were largely the purview of the state, and projects below 2MW were left to the counties to regulate. HB1036/SB931 changes that somewhat for solar projects, as counties are now preempted down to 1MW. Functionally, this means that a county cannot enact siting standards more stringent than those enumerated for projects 1MW and above.

- **Siting Standards** ([Page 15, Line 29 – Page 30, Line 31](#))

The siting standards are the primary function of the entire legislation. These standards were developed with extensive input from county planners and industry representatives. These standards set common rules and, most importantly, are enforceable. Counties may enact standards that are less stringent than those listed but may not enact more rigorous standards.

- Highlights include:

- Extensive Watering and Vegetative Screening Management Requirements, must have a 90 percent survival threshold
- Extensive Landscape Bonding Requirements
- Setbacks of 150ft from residential dwellings and 100ft from property lines
- Mitigating visual impacts on preservation areas, rural legacy areas, priority preservation areas, public parks, scenic rivers or byways, designated heritage areas, and certain historic sites.
- Include a viewshed in applications analysis
- Limits on grading and ban on removing topsoil.
- Average height limitations of not more than 15ft.
- Ban on emitting light from dawn to dusk.

- **Ban on Bans** ([Page 21, Lines 10-26](#))

Counties are preempted from outright prohibiting solar energy development. Additionally, counties will also be required to process solar development applications below 5MW as a permitted use.

- **Addressing Competing Priorities** ([Page 21, Line 27 – Page 22, Line 17](#))

One of the biggest challenges for counties in developing solar has been competing state policies and priorities. The legislation clarifies the State's intent in two significant ways: banning large-scale development in Tier 1 and 2 growth areas and limiting development to no more than 5 percent of Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs).



Addressing Competing Priorities – The legislation bans large-scale development in Tier 1 and 2 growth areas and limits development to no more than 5% of Priority Preservation Areas.

Energy Storage

Energy Storage (Pages 23 – 25) was addressed to a lesser extent compared to solar. Specifically, several of the siting standards that applied to solar were also applied to energy storage projects.

Highlights include:

- Provide landscaping buffer or vegetative screening if required by the local jurisdiction
• Provide for four-season visual screening of the front-of-the-meter energy storage device
• A local jurisdiction may not require the use of a berm for a front-of-the-meter energy storage device
• Minimize grading to the maximum extent possible
• May not remove topsoil from the parcel, but may move or temporarily stockpile topsoil for grading

(3) A GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR ENERGY GENERATING STATION WITH A GENERATING CAPACITY OF MORE THAN 5 MEGAWATTS, AS MEASURED BY THE ALTERNATING CURRENT RATING OF THE SOLAR ENERGY GENERATING STATION'S INVERTER, MAY NOT BE LOCATED ON ANY LOT, PARCEL, OR TRACT OF LAND THAT, AS OF JANUARY 1, 2025, IS LOCATED WITHIN:

(i) A TIER 1 OR TIER 2 MAPPED LOCALLY DESIGNATED GROWTH AREA ADOPTED UNDER § 1-506 OF THE LAND USE ARTICLE;

22 HOUSE BILL 1036

(ii) A MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA OR HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA, AS DEFINED IN § 5-1601 OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES ARTICLE; OR

(iii) A MIXED-USE AREA WITH A RESIDENTIAL COMPONENT.

(4) (i) THE TOTAL COMBINED NUMBER OF SOLAR ENERGY GENERATING STATIONS THAT MAY BE APPROVED FOR CONSTRUCTION IN A PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREA THAT WAS ESTABLISHED BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2025, SHALL:

1. BE LIMITED IN AREA TO 5% OF THE TOTAL ACREAGE OF THE PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREA;

2. BE LOCATED IN THE PROJECT AREA WITHIN THE PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREA; AND

3. MEET ALL REQUIREMENTS UNDER THIS SECTION.

(ii) THE PROHIBITIONS IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION DO NOT APPLY TO THE REMAINING 95% OF A PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREA ONCE THE 5% LIMITATION UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED FOR THE PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREA.

State Lands

Finally, the legislation (Page 34, Line 25 – Page 35, Line 7) also included a provision requiring the Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Energy Administration, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Planning to assess the suitability of state lands appropriate for solar development.



Looking Ahead

Solar

While significant progress was made this Session in providing more certainty to all stakeholders, legislation aimed at adjusting certain aspects of RECA is highly likely during the 2026 legislative session, especially as more of the policy gets road-tested through implementation. Early contenders for continued debate include the deduction of salvage value in calculating bond amounts and the exclusion of counties without growth tiers or PPAs by January 1, 2025, among other concerns.

Changes in Federal Policy

The biggest influence on future Maryland solar policy will be what happens at the federal level. Both the Trump Administration and members of Congress have voiced loud support for shifting federal priorities away from renewables and back toward fossil fuels. Much of the energy industry is generally buoyed by federal subsidies; if those dollars are shifted away from solar, that could have a significant impact on whether future projects remain viable investments.

Transmission

Besides the topic of generation, the siting of transmission infrastructure also became a topic of major focus during the 2025 Session. While some work was done to improve current transmission infrastructure, many of the biggest challenges remain unresolved. Regardless of whether Maryland embraces renewables or not, there will need to be significant improvements in and expansion of transmission infrastructure. The current infrastructure is either incredibly dated or just no longer suitable to bear the growing demand for energy. This will likely mean more controversial line projects as well as upgrades to existing assets.

For those interested in the other leadership energy-related bills:

- HB1035/SB937 – [The Next Generation Energy Act](#)
- [HB1035 Fiscal Note](#)
- HB1037/SB909 – [Energy Resource Adequacy and Planning Act](#)
- [HB1037 Fiscal Note](#)



[State Activates New Disaster Fund for Allegany Flood Recovery](#)

Kevin Kinnally | June 11, 2025 | [County News](#) / [Emergency Management](#) / [State Budget and Fiscal Issues](#)

Maryland's new State Disaster Recovery Fund will deliver its first-ever award — \$459,375 to Allegany County — to help residents recover from devastating flooding earlier this spring.

For the first time, Maryland will deliver direct relief through the new [State Disaster Recovery Fund \(SDRF\)](#) to help residents recover from a local disaster.

Governor Moore [announced](#) this week that Allegany County will receive \$459,375 to support households impacted by the [May 13 flooding](#).

[MACo and the County Emergency Managers Affiliate led the effort to create the SDRF](#) as a reliable tool for local disaster

recovery. Before its establishment, counties had no consistent way to secure State support after smaller-scale disasters. The

SDRF allows local governments to act quickly, delivering aid without waiting for uncertain or delayed federal assistance.

The SDRF fills a longstanding gap by enabling the State to support residents, businesses, and local governments when local resources are insufficient and federal aid is unavailable. This award highlights the importance of a flexible, State-supported recovery tool that counties have identified as a critical need.

In 2023, with MACo's support, the General Assembly passed legislation ([HB 789/SB 650](#)) to establish the SDRF. Although the [fund lacks a dedicated revenue source and remains underfunded](#), lawmakers passed follow-up legislation in 2025 ([HB 865](#)) to streamline transfers into the fund during emergencies, ensuring support can reach communities when it's needed most.

Allegany County submitted a formal request to the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) after documenting damages that exceeded its ability to respond. MDEM worked closely with local officials to approve the award and coordinate recovery assistance.





The flooding, driven by a stationary low-pressure system, caused Georges Creek to overflow, damaging more than 200 homes and businesses across Allegany County. Westernport experienced some of the most severe impacts, including evacuations and widespread property loss.

“We are deeply grateful for the unwavering support provided by the State of Maryland throughout every phase of our disaster recovery efforts,” said Allegany County Commission President David J. Caporale. “The comprehensive assistance from multiple state departments has been extraordinary, and this monetary award through the new Disaster Recovery Program is both timely and impactful.”

He added, “As the first recipients of this program, we recognize the significance of this moment, and we are committed to putting these resources to immediate use to help our neighbors and communities rebuild stronger than before.”

MACo will continue to advocate for long-term SDRF funding to ensure every Maryland county can respond and recover when disaster strikes.

[Winter Conference](#)

Educational Opportunities

The Winter Conference is a three-day event and is scheduled to be held at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Hotel in Dorchester County through 2025. It draws nearly 1,000 county and state elected and appointed officials.

Educational session topics focus on reviewing timely issues that will be relevant during the upcoming Maryland General Assembly Session. Like the [Summer Conference](#), there are many regional county meetings, state agency briefings, Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) committee and board meetings, and academy credit courses offered.

At the Winter Conference, there are 70 tabletop exhibits on display on Wednesday & Thursday.

Upcoming Winter Conference Dates

(all to be held at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Hotel in Cambridge, MD)

- Dec 10-12, 2025* (details coming soon)

***NEW - HOTEL RESERVATIONS:**

For the 2024 and 2025 Winter Conferences, **hotel reservations will be part of the conference registration process, which will open in mid-October**. No separate hotel reservations will be allowed - all hotel guests must be registered to attend the conference before reserving a hotel room. County elected officials will be notified of registration and reservation availability before all other participants.

Questions? Please email [Virginia White](#).



MACo OPEB Trust *Quick Facts*

The **MACo Pooled OPEB Investment Trust Fund** is a vehicle designed to help local governments invest current funds toward future obligations for retiree health insurance, a.k.a. “other post-employment benefits.” Recent accounting rule changes have highlighted these liabilities on government balance sheets, and many counties are amidst plans to save toward these future costs.

<p>Why a Trust?</p>	<p>Investing through the MACo Pooled OPEB Trust offers governments an opportunity under state law to invest funds in a manner suitable for longer-term assets, and outside the laws generally governing “public funds.” The Trust arrangement ensures that the funds may not be extracted for purposes other than the intended benefits.</p>
<p>Who Can Join?</p>	<p>Both county and municipal governments, and other county-funded entities are welcome to join the MACo OPEB Trust. Whether you have one-time funds to put toward OPEB costs, or are funding annual contributions, the Trust can put your investment to work for your jurisdiction. There is no minimum deposit to join the Trust and establish an account. Funds may be withdrawn at any time.</p>
<p>What is The Trust’s Investment Policy?</p>	<p>Overall, the Trustees have adopted a fairly conservative mixed portfolio, with 65% in equities and 35% in fixed income investments. The target rate of return for the Trust is 7% annually, set generally in keeping with industry trends given the diversified portfolio construction. Members may continue to use their own return assumption embedded in local plan valuations. The trust is currently migrating into active investments using a dollar cost averaging method, with some allocations still in cash during that transition.</p>
<p>Why Pool Together?</p>	<p>Pooling assets together have multiple potential benefits for participating governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• this is a “ready to go” option for a government who doesn’t have a Trust established• sharing legal and administrative overhead costs reduces each participant’s share• pooling assets gain opportunities for lower fees for investment advisors• greater pooled assets gain access to stronger investment options
<p>Trust Advisors:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Davenport & Company – offering Trust management and administrative services• McGuire Woods – offering legal services to the Trust and its members• Boomershine Consulting – actuarial services to the Trust and its members• Wilmington Trust – custodial and reporting services• GYL Financial Synergies – investment consultant to the Trust• Clifton Larson Allen – independent auditors
<p>Where Can I Find More Information?</p>	<p>Contact MACo Executive Director (and ex-officio Trustee) Michael Sanderson at 410.269.0043 or msanderson@mdcounties.org with any inquiries.</p> <p>Read more online at: https://www.mdcounties.org/250/OPEB-Trust</p>



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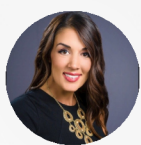
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The NACo EDGE Public Promise Procurement Advisory Committee

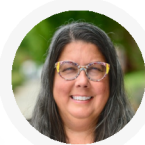
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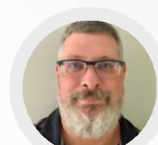
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