

Main Challenges Currently Facing Counties in Maryland and How MACo Is Working With County in Maryland to Address These Challenges in the Coming Year

Counties in Maryland face multiple challenges in funding essential services and maintaining critical infrastructure.

These include:

Rising School Construction Costs

- Increased school construction costs due to labor markets and labor laws, and a statewide assessment of school facilities with the aim of reducing the State's school construction capital costs.
 - 2019 Action: Advocacy through county representation on school construction work group (MACo's advocacy in 2018 ensured county inclusion) to track any potential changes to the State's school construction commitment.

Increasing K-12 Education Standards

- A Statewide Commission is conducting a review of K-12 education funding and funding formulas, and consideration of expanding existing pre-K programs, increasing teacher salaries, and requiring counties to contribute additional funding toward special education.
 - 2019 Action: Advocacy through county representation on Commission and legislative advocacy on any bills introduced.

Next Generation 9-1-1

- The need for costly technological enhancements to 9-1-1 Call Centers to attain Next Generation standards.
 - 2019 Action: Advocacy through the Commission to Advance Next Generation 9-1-1 in Maryland (A MACo 2018 initiative) and likely 2019 legislation to increase and modify the 9-1-1 fee to support NG 9-1-1.

The Opioid Crisis

- The continuing opioid crisis and the needs of county law enforcement, corrections, and health departments confronting this epidemic.
 - 2019 Action: Possible legislation to fund the operational and capital costs for more residential treatment beds, on-demand support and treatment facilities, and recovery housing, and possible separate legislation to increase local health department funding.

Highway User Revenue Cuts

- Dramatic recession-era cuts of roads funding for county governments. In recent years the State has restored a small fraction of this former funding.
 - 2019 Action: Possible legislation to fully restore highway user revenues.

Preemption of County Law by Maryland Courts

Counties in Maryland also threats to their autonomy and authority, not only through legislation passed by the General Assembly, but by the Maryland courts.

- In recent years, State courts have overturned local laws banning use of certain pesticides, and struck down strict tobacco laws citing the doctrine of field pre-emption.
 - 2019 Action: MACo is considering legislation that would clarify the applicability of field preemption with regard to Maryland State law.

MACo Advocacy Campaigns and Media and Social Media Messaging

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