



## **House Bill 1353**

### *Agriculture – Nuisance Insects*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

Date: March 12, 2019

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1353. The bill establishes a useful program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) for controlling nuisance insects.

HB 1353 would replace an existing black fly control program under the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and MDA and incorporates elements from MDA's successful mosquito control program. The program establishes a Nuisance Insect Fund (with a proposed \$400,000 in funding in the FY 2020 budget). The Fund may be used to cover the direct and indirect costs of eliminating nuisance insects. A local government would have to provide a 50 percent match if it wanted MDA to conduct a control project within its jurisdiction.

While not directly affecting human, animal, or plant health, nuisance insects pose quality of life issues and potentially diminish tourism and recreation revenues. While there are many control programs for pests that are harmful to humans, agriculture, or the environment, there is no such program for nuisance insects beyond black flies. Having an option to treat all types of nuisance insects makes sense.

HB 1353 would create a comprehensive control program to address nuisance insects in a reasonable and sustainable way. The program does not impose a local government mandate as participation in the program is up to the local government. Accordingly, MACo requests the committee give HB 1353 a **FAVORABLE** report.