



Senate Bill 621

Vehicle Laws – Emergency Vehicles – Motorcades and Escorts

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environmental Matters Committee

Date: March 29, 2013

From: Leslie Knapp Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 621. The bill would grant law enforcement personnel limited traffic powers when performing certain motorcade or escort duties and clarify that personnel may cross local jurisdictional boundaries while performing motorcade or escort duties.

SB 621 grants drivers of State and local emergency vehicles certain traffic privileges (such as passing stop signs and red traffic signals, exceeding the speed limit, and traveling through other local jurisdictions in the state) while performing motorcade or escort duties for homeland security, funerals, dignitaries, or facilitating traffic and pedestrian flow around the escort. The jurisdiction that employs a driver in a motorcade or escort must also provide notice of the motorcade or escort to any jurisdiction that the driver will enter while performing or returning from the motorcade or escort.

Under current law, many local jurisdictions are hesitant to volunteer their law enforcement personnel for escort duty that crosses local jurisdictional boundaries because of a lack of authority and concern over potential liability. The bill would not grant broad arrest or enforcement powers to a law enforcement officer performing escort duty outside of the officer's home jurisdiction, but would grant the officer powers to keep the escort moving and to be able to direct the flow of traffic and pedestrians around the escorts. The notice requirement is a simple courtesy so that a jurisdiction is aware when another jurisdiction's personnel will be participating in an escort.

SB 621 clarifies a law enforcement officer's traffic powers when performing motorcade and escort duties and would facilitate the ability of local law enforcement officers to participate in escort duty that crosses local jurisdictional boundaries. Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 621.