

BILL: House Bill 73
TITLE: Intercounty Connector - Public School Bus - Exemption from Toll
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS
DATE: Hearing Held on February 4, 2016
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 73, which would exempt school buses that are used to transport public school students from any toll or fee charged for using the Intercounty Connector (ICC).

MABE appreciates the General Assembly's attention to and efforts to relieve costs incurred by local school systems, including tolls collected for the transport of students in school vehicles. Local boards are continuously engaged in the pursuit of cost savings and efficiencies in operations; and House Bill 73 is certainly consistent with these objectives.

MABE has learned that there may be an impediment to enacting this legislation as introduced arising from the terms of the revenue bonds issued to finance the construction of the ICC. The sponsor of House Bill 73 has therefore proposed amendments to address this issue prospectively with regard to future bond financed projects.

More importantly, the proposed amendments would establish a process for reimbursing local school systems for the costs of tolls paid in the previous fiscal year. MABE supports this approach to achieving the policy objectives of this legislation.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 73, with amendments proposed by the bill sponsor deemed necessary to fulfill the intended goal of cost relief from toll expenses incurred by local school systems.